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22-580mm BRIDGE



NEWS: LEICA IN CSC
LAUNCH U-TURN

Saturday 27 October 2012

amateur photographer

THE WORLD'S NO.1 WEEKLY PHOTO MAGAZINE

www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

HOW TO MASTER SHALLOW DEPTH OF FIELD

AP ADVANCED GUIDE

PAGE 45

- Focal lengths compared
- Avoiding chromatic fringing
- Good bokeh, bad bokeh



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PAGE 55

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Amateur Photographer For everyone who loves photography

WHILE we continue to wait for the outcome of the Ricoh's buyout of Pentax, we now also have to contemplate what Sony's acquisition of a huge slice of Olympus will mean for photographers. It is reasonably clear how Ricoh's high-end compact cameras and the GXR could slot between Pentax's entry compacts and its DSLRs to make a more complete range by the pairing. Sony and Olympus, however, are positioned somewhat more in competition than in complement. We should be pleased that Sony is demonstrating its commitment to the camera market, and that Olympus will have a way out of its financial difficulties – but what the industry needs above anything else is more camera companies, not for two to become one.

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Opening an aperture to its widest extent achieves more than just fast shutter speeds. Richard Sibley describes some of the creative uses for a very shallow depth of field



HOW TO HAVE YOUR PICTURES PUBLISHED IN READER SPOTLIGHT Send in a selection of up to ten images. They can be either a selection of different images or all have the same theme. Digital files sent on CD should be saved in a Photoshop-compatible format, such as JPEG or TIFF, with a contact sheet and submission form. Visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/spotlight for details. We cannot publish images without the necessary technical details. Each RGB image should be a minimum of 2480 pixels along its longest length. Transparencies and prints are also accepted. We recommend that transparencies are sent without glass mounts and posted via Special Delivery. For transparencies, prints or discs to be returned you must include an SAE with sufficient postage.

HOW TO CONTACT US Amateur Photographer, IPC Media, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU **AP Editorial Telephone:** 0203 148 4138 **Fax** 0203 148 8123 **Email** amateurphotographer@ipcmedia.com **AP Advertising Telephone:** 0203 148 2516 **Email** mark_rankine@ipcmedia.com **AP Subscriptions Telephone:** 0844 848 0848 **Email** ipcsubs@quadrantsubs.com **AP test reports Telephone:** 01707 273 773 www.testreports.co.uk/photography/ap

THE AP READERS' POLL

IN AP 6 OCTOBER WE ASKED...

Have you seen the pictures of Kate?



YOU ANSWERED...

A Yes, online	23%
B Yes, in print	1%
C No, but I'd like to	10%
D No, I'd not know how	9%
E No, I wouldn't look if they were in front of me	57%

THIS WEEK WE ASK...

Is the Sony investment in Olympus a good thing?

VOTE ONLINE www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

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PENTAX

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PENTAX K-5 II

As the flagship model of the K series, the K-5 II boasts many advanced functions and user-friendly features, including a newly developed AF sensor assuring a broader AF working EV range.

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News | Analysis | Comment | PhotoDiary 27/10/12

“All the windows were covered. It looked like a warehouse”

Hasselblad goes undercover, page 6

Interview controversy • CSC climbdown • AP defends story

LEICA IN MIRRORLESS CAMERA DENIAL

AMATEUR Photographer and the British Journal of Photography have hit back at a claim that they 'misrepresented' Leica's mirrorless camera plans following an interview last year.

In a joint interview with AP and BJP in June 2011, Leica CEO Alfred Schopf and chairman Dr Andreas Kaufmann revealed plans to announce a compact system camera (CSC) at photokina 2012 in a bid to compete with the likes of Panasonic, Olympus, Sony and Samsung.

Details were scant, but the camera would feature an imaging sensor at least as large as APS-C size, said Schopf, who indicated that he saw a market for a Leica camera aimed at the consumer.

'We are looking into that... it's more than an idea... You will see something at the next photokina,' Schopf told AP's Chris Cheesman and BJP's Olivier Laurent at a hotel in Paris.

However, in May 2012, Kaufmann and Schopf were tight-lipped, steering journalists away from a consumer CSC, instead stressing that the 'M family' was very high on the agenda.

Then at last month's photokina, Leica unveiled the M-E – a full-frame 'entry-level' version of the M9 rangefinder, costing £3,900.

Speaking at the German trade show, the company's head of product management Stefan Daniel appeared to rule out any prospect of Leica ever launching a '£1,000' CSC.

However, in a recent report by the website Leica News and Rumors, published



Leica unveiled the £3,900 M-E at photokina 2012 in Cologne, Germany, last month

on 4 October 2012, Leica denies that bosses ever suggested they were planning a consumer-level CSC.

In the Leica News and Rumors article, Daniel – who was not present at the 2011 AP and BJP interview – is quoted as saying: 'We're not happy about the interview that started that rumour.'

'We feel that it rather misrepresented what was said. However, we know that there is a gap between the X2 and the M, both in terms of pricing and features. We do not comment on possible future products.'

Responding to the allegation, AP and BJP issued a joint statement, which read: 'BJP and AP stand by their reporting of comments made by Leica representatives during a wide-ranging interview with UK

journalists in Paris in June 2011.'

'The magazines absolutely refute any suggestion that Leica's stated intentions at that time were misrepresented.'

Leica CEO Alfred Schopf is quoted as telling Leica News and Rumors: 'What was asked was whether Leica was going to make cameras with live view. We've given the answer with the Leica X2 and the Leica M.'

The article continues with a blow-by-blow account of how the 'mirrorless system camera rumour started'.

At the time of writing, Leica had yet to respond to a request for comment on the Leica News and Rumors article.

Other members of the UK photographic press were present at the 2011 interview.

LEICA TO DEBUT V-LUX 4

LEICA is set to release the V-Lux 4, a bridge camera incorporating a 25–600mm [35mm equivalent] lens claimed to deliver f/2.8 throughout the zoom range.

Due out in November, priced £690, the 12.1-million-pixel (effective) model features a top equivalent ISO of 6400 and full HD video (1920x1080 pixels), plus a stereo microphone.

Also on board is a 1.4-million-dot-resolution EVF with dioptre correction,

plus a 3in, 460,000-dot LCD screen that can be rotated to aid composition.

Also included are a top shutter speed of 1/4000sec and scene modes such as HDR and sunset.

The V-Lux 4 kit will include Adobe Photoshop Lightroom 4 software.



SNAP SHOTS

● Hasselblad is poised to debut the H5D. The medium-format camera boasts a new engine, plus features such as improved weather-proofing and larger buttons, according to the company. A new 24mm H-system lens aims to deliver the 35mm viewing-angle equivalent of a 17mm optic. The H5D is due out in December, priced from £12,295 excluding VAT.

● Leica has announced three new S-system lenses: a 24mm f/3.5 Super-Elmar-S ASPH (due in November, priced £5,330); the 120mm TS-AP0-Elmar-S f/5.6 ASPH tilt/shift lens (due in January 2013, costing £4,920); and the Elpro-S 180, a close-up lens designed to extend the working range of the Leica 180mm f/3.5 AP0-Elmar-S optic (due out now, priced £800). The latter is claimed to produce a reduced close-focus distance of 1.1m.



Do you have a story?

Contact Chris Cheesman
Tel: 0203 148 4129
Fax: 0203 148 8130
amateurphotographer@ipcmmedia.com

A week of photographic opportunity

PHOTO DIARY

Wednesday 24 October

EXHIBITION The Glen – Autumn and Winter in Wild Cairngorm by Joe Cornish, ends today at Joe Cornish Galleries, Northallerton DL6 1NA. Tel: 01609 777 404. Visit www.joecornishgallery.co.uk. **DON'T MISS** Calumet Open Day, demos and advice (10am–4pm) at Calumet, Glasgow G20 7LU. Tel: 0141 353 0875. Visit www.calumetphoto.co.uk.

Thursday 25 October

EXHIBITION Prix Pictet: Power (shortlisted entries from the Prix Pictet competition), until 28 October at Saatchi Gallery, London SW3 4SQ. Visit www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk. **EXHIBITION** London in Character by Jean-Francois Rodrigues, until 4 November at Marika Rose Gallery, Chicchi Art Lounge, London E3 5ES. Visit www.chicchi.co.uk.

Friday 26 October

EXHIBITION Other Spaces by Jo Longhurst (portraits of gymnasts), until 26 January 2013 at Ffotogallery, Penarth CF64 3DH. Tel: 029 2070 8870. Visit www.ffotogallery.org. **DON'T MISS** Brighton Photo Biennial features free exhibitions in the East Sussex seaside town, until 4 November. Visit www.bpb.org.uk.

Saturday 27 October

EXHIBITION Thursdays By The Sea by Marcus Doyle, until 2 January 2013 at Margaret Street Gallery, London W1W 8SW. Tel: 0207 323 0140. Visit www.margaretstreetgallery.com. **EXHIBITION** Fading Light: A Portrait of British Centenarians by Chris Steele-Perkins, until 23 November at University Gallery, Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8ST. Tel: 0191 227 4424. Visit www.universitygallery.co.uk.

Sunday 28 October

DON'T MISS Affordable Art Fair at Battersea Evolution, Battersea Park, London SW11 4NJ. Visit affordableartfair.com/battersea. **EXHIBITION** Cecil Beaton: Theatre of War, until 1 January 2013 at Imperial War Museum, London SE1 6HZ. Visit www.iwm.org.uk.

Monday 29 October

EXHIBITION Astronomy Photographer of the Year, until February 2013 at Royal Observatory Greenwich, London SE10 9NF. Tel: 0208 858 4422. Visit www.rmg.co.uk/astrophoto. **DON'T MISS** Masterclass: Camera-Less Photography with Paul Kenny (10.30am–5pm, costs £60) at Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool L3 1BP. Tel: 0151 236 6768. Visit www.openeye.org.uk.



Tuesday 30 October **LATEST AP ON SALE**

EXHIBITION Edouard Baldus and The Modern Landscape (1850s salt prints), until 9 November at James Hyman, London W1S 3PL. Tel: 0207 494 3857. Visit www.jameshy mangallery.com. **EXHIBITION** British Wildlife Photography Exhibition, until 24 February 2013 at Horniman Museum & Gardens, London SE23 3PQ. Tel: 0208 699 1872. Visit www.horniman.ac.uk.

Communication on a need-to-know basis

HASSELBLAD: HOW WE BEAT LEAKS



Alessandrini (right) shows the Lunar to AP's Richard Sibley at photokina 2012

LAST month, Swedish camera maker Hasselblad caught most of the photographic industry off-guard when it unveiled a plan to launch its Lunar compact system camera.

Unlike many camera launches of recent years, the firm was able to keep the launch completely leak-free.

Hasselblad's business development manager Luca Alessandrini has revealed how the Lunar – which is being developed in partnership with Sony – was kept firmly under wraps.

Alessandrini told AP's Chris Cheesman that the firm was able to keep the news secret thanks to a small team and covert operations surrounding the project.

Hasselblad's new-design offices in Italy were put into near-lockdown and it seems all communications regarding Lunar were on a strictly need-to-know basis.

'There was nothing on the [door] bell,' said Alessandrini.

'All the windows were covered. It looked like a warehouse.'

'We didn't give out anything, we didn't print out anything at our office and we used the codename "Pink".'

Alessandrini said printing of all literature shown at photokina was carried out in-house, with nothing leaving the office.

'We were transporting things [in and out], not in Hasselblad boxes but in [plain] cardboard ones.'

'We couldn't send any pictures or mention the project in emails.'

'No mobile phones were allowed during meetings... We signed NDAs [non-disclosure agreements] everywhere.'

Four teams were involved in the secret project worldwide – in Denmark, Sweden, Italy and Japan.



LEICA LAUNCHES PAUL SMITH X2

LEICA has launched a special Paul Smith edition of its X2, featuring body colours chosen by the British designer in a limited edition of 1,500 units.

Features include an orange top-plate, yellow base plate and a hand-drawn, engraved, light bulb 'doodle', designed to draw attention to the pop-up flash.

The camera sports a racing green-coloured leather finish.

Up to 80 of the cameras were expected to reach the UK this month, priced £2,000.

UK PHOTO MARKET SEES 10% DIP SINCE LAST YEAR

THE UK'S digital camera market fell 10% in value from January to August compared to the same eight months the previous year, new figures reveal.

'2012 is a challenging year for the imaging sector,' reports GfK Retail and Technology UK in its latest newsletter.

'The total value of the digital camera market was down 10% in value and 16% in units...'

Compact cameras continued to take the biggest hit, with sales of models featuring a zoom of less than 10x plunging 36% in revenue terms.

However, the demand for 'superzoom' compacts rose nearly 50% over the same period, compared to 2011.

DSLR sales remained flat over the period, according to GfK.

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THOUSANDS KNOCKED OFF 645D

PENTAX has knocked £3,000 off the kit price of its 645D medium-format DSLR since the camera was launched in the UK less than two years ago.

The 645D body is now £6,299.99, while the 645D with a 55mm lens costs £6,999.99.

When it went on sale in the UK in December 2010, the 645D cost £8,999.99 body only, and £9,999.99 with a 55mm lens.

'There's never been a better time to buy,' said Pentax Ricoh Imaging UK's product co-ordinator Stephen Sanderson in an email.

Asked to explain the massive price drop, a company spokesperson said: 'We want to offer customers quality products at competitive market prices.'

'The price reduction for the 645D medium-format camera reflects this ethos. The new price offers tremendous value for money.'

Plans to launch the 645D were first unveiled at Tokyo's Photo Imaging Expo



Medium-format just became more affordable thanks to a £3,000 price-cut on the Pentax 645D since launch

show in March 2005. But plans to launch the camera were halted three years later, before being revived in 2009.

OLYMPUS HINTS AT LOWER PRICES

THE OLYMPUS tie-up with Sony is set to boost the product and price competitiveness of the firms' cameras.

Olympus president Hiroyuki Sasa said the 'mutual supply of key components' will 'strengthen the competitiveness of product/price'.

Sasa made the comments at a meeting in Tokyo, three days after Olympus announced its alliance with Sony in a £400m deal.

Meanwhile, Olympus plans to plough on with its focus on mirrorless interchangeable-lens cameras and 'high-end' compacts, in accordance with a previously announced restructure of its imaging business.

Outlining details of the business and capital alliance, Sasa added in a presentation: 'By combining the two

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companies' strengths through an alliance in the medical and digital camera businesses, we aim to enhance the corporate value of each company.'

Olympus has announced plans to step up imaging production in China, cut staff costs and focus on interchangeable lenses, while outsourcing assembly.

Speaking before the tie-up announcement, Sasa said Olympus will 'increase product profitability by regularly introducing unique, high-value-added compact cameras, unmatched by competitors...'

In an interview published in the firm's annual report, Sasa added: 'For instance, we will increase productivity by introducing the latest production technologies at the Shenzhen plant in China, focus production on high-value-added lens barrels and interchangeable lenses, and actively utilise outside production in assembly processes, in which it is generally difficult to create added value.'

Sasa – who was elected president in April – added: 'Furthermore, by fiscal [year] 2015 we will achieve an improvement of eight percentage points in the SG&A [selling, general & administrative expenses] ratio in the Imaging Business, through selection and concentration of advertising investment and personnel optimisation in Japan and overseas.'

BAILEY REVEALS HIDDEN POLAROIDS

A BOX of Polaroid photos shot by famed photographer David Bailey in the 1970s has been revealed for a new exhibition.

'In '74 I photographed the cannibals in New Guinea,' explained Bailey. 'They treated me okay but they didn't make you feel relaxed...'

The exhibition runs until 3 November at the Daniel Blau gallery, 51 Hoxton Square, London N1 6PB.



**Do you have
a story?**

Contact Chris Cheesman
Tel: 0203 148 4129
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AP THIS WEEK IN...

1928

ALTHOUGH midsummer, particularly the months of June and July, are the best for ordinary snapshot work with the cheaper forms of cameras, the autumn season is without doubt the best season for artistic and pleasing lighting effects. During the summer foliage, too, is a consideration. During the summer



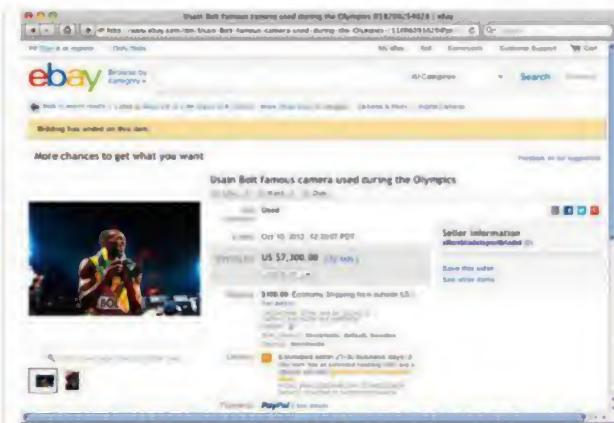
The autumn is 'without doubt the best season for artistic and pleasing lighting effects', declared AP this week in 1928. This contrasts with the summer months when 'the monotony of greens calls for special care in lighting if one wishes to secure a really pictorial rendering'. In autumn, however, when the leaves change colour, the amateur has a better chance of rendering the differences in the shades, modern self-screen or non-filter plates and films often recording them even when no filter is used on the lens. Even when the main object is architecture, and when little or no foliage is included in a scene, one may in autumn get the most pleasing lighting effects, because of a lower sun even at midday.'

SNAP SHOTS

● Photographers can try out the latest DSLRs and CSCs at the LCE Digital Photo & Optics Show in Southampton on Sunday 2 December. Organised by the London Camera Exchange, the free event promises expert advice, demonstrations and the chance to win a Canon PowerShot G12. The event takes place at The Novotel Hotel, 1 West Quay Road, Southampton SO15 1RA. Tel: 023 8033 5363.

● Classic Leica cameras are on show in London from 21-24 October before being shipped to Hong Kong for an auction. Auctioneers Bonhams has put more than 250 lots on display at its base in Knightsbridge, London SW7 1HH. The Hong Kong auction will take place on 23 November.

● Dallas TV star Larry Hagman has backed a project that helps budding young photographers in the US city. Speaking at a Dallas library, Hagman – who plays the TV character JR Ewing – lent his support to two local photography organisations, reported dallasnews.com.



\$7,300 raised for charity

USAIN BOLT NIKON D4 SOLD ON EBAY

A SIGNED Nikon D4 DSLR used by Olympic gold medallist Usain Bolt has been sold to raise money for cancer research.

The camera fetched \$7,300 on online auction site eBay. But this was thousands of dollars less than was hoped because the original auction web page breached eBay guidelines and had to be taken down.

Bolt borrowed the camera from press photographer Jimmy Wixtröm shortly after winning the 200m Olympic final during the summer.

The resulting images of Bolt clutching the D4 – and the pictures he shot of fellow athletes – were splashed across TV, websites and newspapers worldwide.

'After he was done taking the photos, Bolt carved his name on the camera with a screwdriver – and thus made

it unique,' read a description of the item on eBay.

Wixtröm works for Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet*, which sold the camera.

The online auction had attracted a bid of more than \$11,600 before it was pulled after intervention from eBay.

Wixtröm said the original link was removed because eBay bans the mention of charities 'other than their own'.

The sale was relaunched – with all references to the charity removed – but failed to reach its previous highest bid.

Part of the funds raised were also due to go to Bolt's own foundation in Jamaica, which encourages children to seek education.

The lot – said to show 'cosmetic' signs of wear – came with a framed 50x70cm print.

'LARGEST' PHOTO EXHIBITION UNVEILED

A PHOTOGRAPHY

exhibition showcased on tens of thousands of outdoor screens across 22 countries has been hailed the largest ever.

The exhibition comprised 45 images chosen from 100,000 captured by amateur and professional photographers on 15 May, as part of a Swedish project called ADay.org.

Members of the public were tasked to document 'what really lies close to us and how photography connects us'.

A Day In The World was

simultaneously shown on 85,733 digital screens worldwide on 8 October, including the UK where it could be seen at mainline railway stations and locations such as Heathrow Airport.

'The synchronised exhibition will kick off in the furthest eastern screen in Sydney, Australia and travel across the world until it reaches the most western in Las Vegas, USA,' said organisers, who expected more than 46 million viewers over a 48-hour period.

CLUB NEWS

Club news from around the country

HAMPSTEAD PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

The society holds its 75th anniversary exhibition until 4 November at Swiss Cottage Library, 88 Avenue Road, London NW3 3HA. Visit www.hampsteadphotosoc.org.uk.

LOWESTOFT PHOTOGRAPHIC CLUB

The club hosts its annual exhibition from 22 October-3 November at Lowestoft Library, Clapham Road South, Suffolk NR32 1DR. For details visit www.lowestoft-lpc.co.uk.



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APReview

The latest photography books, exhibitions and websites. By Oliver Atwell

BOOK



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BOOK

Josef Sudek: The Legacy of a Deeper Vision

Edited by Maia-Mari Sutnik Hirmer Verlag, £45, 288 pages, hardback, ISBN 978-3-7774-5291-3

JOSEF Sudek may not be as famous as other 20th century photographers but his photography is worthy to stand alongside that of photographic greats Cartier-Bresson, Steichen, Atget and Brassai. In this magnificent book, the editors bring together 175 of Sudek's black & white images taken from the Art Gallery of Ontario's collection. Czech photographer Sudek, whose career stretched to some 60 years, was a solitary man who spent much of his time traversing the streets of Prague photographing the everyday oddities he encountered. His subjects included beautifully lit street views,

architecture and landscapes, but he also photographed many still lifes. Even the most ordinary items became the subjects of his lens – eggshells, vases, rope – each miraculously turned into a bizarre, constructed still life captured with geometric precision.

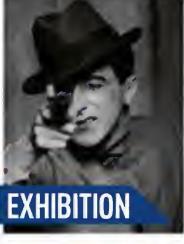
What is most striking about Sudek's work is his exquisite use of natural light. Once referring to the photographic image as the 'harvest of light and shadow', his skill in perfectly balancing these two elements plays out time and time again throughout the book. A photographer who changed artistic

direction many times, Sudek embraced art movements including surrealism, cubism, and modernism, and consequently there is a strangeness and abstraction to his work. His images are, as art historian and curator Antonin Dufek writes in an accompanying essay, a perception of the world rather than a description of it. Sudek never wrote about his images, which adds to their enduring mystique, but the few thoughts he did share say it all: 'The charm of everything is in its mystery'. **Gemma Padley**



Magnum Revolution: 60 Years of Fighting for Freedom

By Jon Lee Anderson and Paul Watson
Prestel, £35, hardback, ISBN 978-3-7913-4644-1



EXHIBITION



© RUDOLF STIER/PHOTOGRAPHERS GALLERY



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CONDENSED READING

A round-up of the latest photography books on the market

WHO better qualified to publish a book that features images of conflict, than Magnum Photos the original photojournalism agency? This latest release is an impressive volume that catalogues key conflicts and events from the past six decades. Magnum giants such as René Burri, Josef Koudelka, Ian Berry and Steve McCurry feature amongst many others. Starting with recent conflicts such as the uprisings in Tunisia, Syria, Egypt and Libya, the book works its way back through a

history of modern conflict ending at the Hungarian Uprising in 1956. Each chapter focuses (in textbook fashion, though with images of far superior quality) on a different country and conflict. Featuring colour and b&w images from the Magnum archive and interviews with photographers that help to illuminate the pictures, *Magnum Revolution* is a beautiful record of recent worldwide conflict and uprising. **Gemma Padley**



Shoot! Existential Photography

Until 6 January 2013. The Photographer's Gallery, 16-18 Ramillies Street, London W1F 7LW. Tel: 0207 087 9300. www.thephotographersgallery.org.uk. Open Mon-Sat 10am-6pm (Thurs until 8pm), Sun 11:30am-6pm. Admission: £5 (concessions £3)

THOUGH long-since forgotten, a popular fairground attraction that sprung up following the First World War was the photo-shooting gallery. Customers were encouraged to aim at a bullseye, which, once hit, would trigger a camera that captured them in the act of shooting. Examples of these portraits from 60 years have been collected as part of this exhibition that explores the relationship between photography and shooting.

It isn't surprising that the 'Celebrity Cabinet' section, features philosophers Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir; after all, what an allure this morbid sideshow must have held for minds grappling with human nature.

Alongside shooting-gallery photos the exhibition features multimedia installations, short films and modern photo series.

PHOTOGRAPHY MAD is a blog by Pete Williams; a place for him to share the tips and tricks he's learned in his efforts to become a better photographer. Each post is concerned with a single technique, ranging from creating a vignette in Photoshop to understanding the rule of thirds. The explanations are clear and sprinkled with illustrative examples. However, there is no contents list or a category system, and the only ways to navigate are either to trawl through the posts chronologically or to use the search function. However, the site has plenty of potential.

WEBSITE

photographymad.com



● LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY ART AND TECHNIQUES

by Neil Crighton, £16.99 With plenty of similar guides on the market, this slender volume may find itself jostling with the competition. There is an impressive amount of information packed in, and it's all well written and easy to follow. Sadly, the short space means the quality of images is sometimes lacking, and layouts often feel cramped. Still, worth a look for landscape beginners.



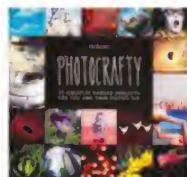
● UNDERSTANDING RAW PHOTOGRAPHY

by David Taylor, £14.99 Another entry into the reliable Expanded Guide series, this book aims to dispel the notion that shooting in raw is solely the province of professionals and tech-heads. David Taylor's sensible, practical advice helps ease in those who may feel intimidated by raw, and it's all well presented with plenty of visual aids.



● SETTING UP A SUCCESSFUL PHOTOGRAPHY BUSINESS

by Lisa Pritchard, £12.99 Given author Lisa Pritchard's years of experience in photo agencies, it is unsurprising that this book on making it as a freelance photographer is packed with advice from people who've done it themselves. Though the text editing is a little sloppy, this is thorough guide touches on wide ranging aspects of the aspects of the business.



● PHOTOCRAFTY by Sue Venables £14.95 No one in their right mind would call photography a cheap hobby; as such, it's refreshing to see a book with so many tips on how to use inexpensive materials to create great photos. The 'crafty' approach may turn off those with little interest in experimenting with scissors and glue, but the tone is fun and it's nice to see something a bit different on the shelves.

Letters

Share your views and opinions with fellow AP readers every week



LETTER OF THE WEEK

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ADVANCE

It's ironic that the Royal Photographic Society has honoured Steve J Sisson with an award for inventing the digital camera just as his former employer Eastman Kodak ceases production of them (News, AP 13 October). The photo of Steve holding up his 1975 invention shows a huge instrument you could use as a battering ram. Yet amazingly, it was the forerunner of the today's tiny digital compacts. But how did a camera pioneered 37 years ago take so long to reach today's mass market? Steve's award – the Progress Medal – is given to those who have



FUJIFILM

brought about important advances in photography. In his case that's rather understating his contribution. Digital is without doubt one of, if not the most significant advances in the history of photography.

Just as Edwin Land stunned the world with the Polaroid camera, Steve J Sisson made his mark as a true visionary. When I'm strolling about with my Canon Ixus compact, I'll spare a thought for Steve's breezblock-sized digital camera – which in 1975 would have been state-of-the-art – and without which here in 2012 we'd all still be using film.

Kevin O'Donnell, Tyne & Wear

Write to...

'Letters' at the usual AP address (see page 3) fax to 020 3148 8130 or email to amateurphotographer@ipcmedia.com

*Please indicate whether you would like to receive Fujifilm film or a memory card (please state type preferred) and include your full postal address

Backchat

Send your thoughts or views (about 500 words) to 'Backchat' at the usual AP address (see page 3). A fee of £50 will be paid on publication

RIGHTS FOR EVERYONE

I was rather annoyed by the tone of the letters about the topless photos of the Duchess of Cambridge (Letters, AP 6 October). One correspondent said we would 'deserve' our rights only if we condemned the photographer in question, while Mick Bidewell in Backchat seems to think it's wrong to take topless pics of the duchess just because she is 'our future queen'.

Maybe the future queen should not sunbathe topless, if pictures of the fact are so damaging. As for the notion that I should have to do anything to 'deserve'

my freedoms – no. My freedoms are mine because my forebears fought for them. And the idea of censorship of the press is one of the evils my forebears fought against.

The sole question about the photos is: Were they taken legally? If not, the photographer (and the publishers) should be punished. But if they were taken legally, the argument should stop there. *Amateur Photographer* and many of its readers are supporters of photographers' rights. Those rights are for everyone and should not be abandoned just because some images are 'tasteless'. **Martin Topping, via email**

What The Duck



PIMP MY CAMERA

With the cost of photography – be it kit, weddings and so on – rightfully at the forefront of people's mind, I read the piece on Hasselblad's entry into the CSC market with much intrigue (AP 20 October). They say that it 'borrows from the Sony NEX-7', but in reality it will be a 'pimped-up' NEX-7 featuring a host of add-ons and features that have no impact on the camera's images. The fact that I can own a camera with the same wood as fitted in a supercar does nothing for me. Luxury editions with python leather or antique gold are, in my mind, gratuitous and ethically dubious, especially the way the economy is today.

To quote: 'A camera for those who aspire to shoot with a Hasselblad'. I read it more as saying: 'A camera for those who think first of being seen shooting, rather than with the results of what they've shot'. That's not to say the image quality won't be good – but I'd rather get the same good results from the NEX-7 and keep the excess £3,000. Maybe I could use the money saved to buy a diamond studded lens hood...

William BJ Spencer, via email

I have to say that, for now at least, I completely agree with you, William – Damien Demolder, Editor

A MONUMENTAL FOLLY

The problem I have with Ivor Matanle's AP articles is that they remind me of the very many classic cameras I have owned over the past 50 years, arousing in me strong emotions of envy and covetousness. None more so than Ivor's Contax article in AP 29 September, for I was reminded of a beautiful Contax IIIa and f/1.5 Sonnar I had from Ivor in 1980. I added to this, from Ivor and other sources, until I had a godly array of IIIa and IIa bodies and lenses.

Until, that is, a friend persuaded me to switch to screw-thread Leicas and lenses – a monumental folly which to this day I very greatly regret, for neither cameras or lenses came close to the Contax models and their wonderful optics.

Would I love another Contax? You bet I would! Could I afford it? Sadly, no.

Harry Kitchen, Cornwall

Ivor's articles should come with a warning. I read them with my eyes shut – Damien Demolder, Editor

QUALITY VS AESTHETICS

I have always agreed with the sentiment expressed by Roger Hicks in AP 13 October

that we should value the aesthetics of cameras more, and have been dismayed by the appearance of most cameras that come out of Japan – whose culture has historically prized aesthetics. However, having seen the results from my son's Sigma DP2 Merrill (to say it is not a particularly attractive camera would be an understatement), any idea that I would reject this piece of equipment on aesthetic grounds is completely overruled by the astounding quality of the files it produces. The only comparable files I have seen are from the Hasselblad of the pro who supplies the design studio I work for. I believe this camera has overturned the traditional expectations of what a digital camera can produce in the way of what may be called 'image quality'. I also look forward to hearing whether Roger Hicks will suppress his gag reflex and go out and buy one – I think I will.

Ronald Thain, Inverness-shire

NO GIMMICK

Regarding Richard Sibley's reply to Mike Gosling about the Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ200 (AskAP, AP 13 October), Richard's 'damning with faint praise' may be technically justified, but any downside is vastly outweighed, in practice, by the actual picture-taking qualities of this camera and its predecessor, the FZ150, which are excellent.

This preoccupation with sensor size prompts me to wonder whether we should ask ourselves what we really want from a



camera. The answer in many, if not most cases would probably be far less than the awesome capabilities of an expensive and heavy DSLR. I have gravitated away from a Canon EOS 60D – a great camera (even beating Nikon in one AP test!) but heavy!

After my downsizing journey – a great story but not enough space here – I ended up with an FZ150. In many years as a photographer I have never owned a more usable camera. I soon learned to forget about the sensor size after producing A4 prints and even occasional A3s with absolutely no problem. Furthermore, the 600mm end of the lens is certainly no gimmick. It is excellent and a fraction of the cost of a separate 600mm lens for a DSLR. Perhaps Mike should look at the user reviews online. They are almost all 100% positive. **Barnabas Wilson, via email**

PASSING THE TORCH

My first digital camera was a Kodak EasyShare DX3700 with 3.1 million pixels and 8MB of internal memory, which I bought in 2002. After a couple of years of unhappiness, I upgraded to Minolta Dimage 7, mainly for its 5-million-pixel resolution. It had its own share of problems, like needing to carry

the battery charger everywhere, but with it I took this picture of my then month-old son and sent a couple of entries into your magazine. It was around then that I was inspired to think about the Canon EOS 1000D. But something happened, subconsciously. Photography fell by the way side.

I really don't remember why my passion for photography suddenly disappeared – perhaps my life, career and family became priorities. Now I have taken up photography as a passion again, but why? Watching the little one grow up and realising he needs a hobby has probably driven me to it.



Maybe I want to explore, to have some adventure now that I am not getting any younger and cannot indulge in sports or high-adrenaline activities. Maybe I cannot teach my little one sports, or encourage him to take up other activities, but I can surely direct him on the three Rs and photography. At the moment he is still learning, but it is only a matter of time before he starts composing and taking spectacular shots, if only because time is on his side. For me the lapsed time is full of wonderful memories, from the picture of the him with a copy of AP to a boy standing with a tripod.

Seshi Middela, via email

BACK CHAT

AP reader Steve Brown makes a plea for us all to try to overcome our equipment addictions

FOR THE majority of people a point-and-shoot compact or even a camera phone is their introduction to photography. A plethora of snaps posted on a social networking site fulfil a basic desire to immortalise the high points of an otherwise dull life. Holiday photos often take the form of a group – either in miniature in front of some well-known tourist attraction or shot in close-up with only a tantalising glimpse of an interesting view in the background.

Most people never graduate from this form of photography and when they share it with those not involved in the action, reactions range from politely feigned interest to yawning boredom. Those who aspire to make photographs that inspire interest and admiration often feel that the only way to achieve this is to invest in equipment. Wrong! You may ask why – surely the quality of the image will be better with a more expensive camera? But to use an analogy, would you become a world-class chef simply by owning an expensive oven? Ridiculous! It takes years of training and study to become any kind of chef; very few people have the natural ability to cook anything other than average food – no amount of fancy kitchen equipment would ever change that!

So it is with photography: if you cannot compose a visual treat on a cheap, basic camera, then an expensive SLR and lenses will not make you a better photographer. The only thing you will achieve is much sharper evidence of your shortcomings!

It is an unfortunate fact of life that many men (although I'm sure some women too) become obsessed with the technical features and performance of cameras. The evidence for this is found in the myriad technical reviews of new cameras and lenses that appear on a weekly basis. Far from guaranteeing better photographs, this obsession forms a major distraction from the ultimate aim of the photographer – the production of an image that resonates with his or her audience. Hand in hand with this worship at the altar of technical advance goes a belief in the power of Photoshop to correct any faults in the original image. The reliance on image-manipulation software to produce a photograph of the highest technical quality is just an extension of the equipment fetish!

If you don't understand the basic compositional ideas of photography, don't waste your money on fancy equipment – only a bad workman blames his tools! No manufacturer has yet produced a camera that can compose a photograph for you, so lay the equipment quest aside and revel in the images that can be produced with even the simplest kit. Many beginners assume that their camera is not good enough, that being the reason for their uninspiring photographs. After spending much money on new equipment there is no change in the quality of their photographs, which I think is the point Edward Steichen was trying to make: 'None of us is as good as the simplest camera!'



PHOTO INSIGHT

Cathal McNaughton explains how he took this dramatic image of a rioter clashing with riot police at the recent Orange Order Parade in Northern Ireland

BRINGING
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EVERY WEEK

I TOOK this image during the annual Orange Order Parade on 12 July this year. The Orange Order is a Protestant organisation and every year parades are held across Northern Ireland to mark the victory of King William at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. The image was taken in Ardoyne in north Belfast, which is a Catholic area, and people were protesting about the Orangemen who were marching by. The protests can turn violent as they did on this occasion. The riot police had to use water cannon to control the situation. I've covered the Twelfth of July parades for about 16 years now. There has been trouble at this particular interface for the past few years – it's a date I can mark in my diary where I know there is probably going to be trouble. I was there with other members of the media knowing civil unrest might occur.

For an event like this you have to get there early in the morning, at around 7am, to park your car in a safe place and get

into position before the police cordon off the roads. It was then a case of waiting to see how events would unfold during the day. There is always some sort of scuffle, but it depends whether these escalate into something more serious, like people burning cars or throwing stones, petrol bombs and other missiles.

There had been trouble leading up to the incident depicted here. Some of the protesters had hijacked a vehicle and set it on fire. This person had run up to the police line with a large rock and hurled it at the police. One of the policemen broke rank and tried to catch him. I climbed up onto a nearby wall and was balancing at the same time as photographing. I made sure I was shooting from a safe vantage point so I didn't become a target myself. Personal safety comes first when photographing an event like this – the story isn't worth putting your life in danger.

Reading the situation and the



atmosphere is paramount. You always have to be alert and aware of what's going on. Lines can move and areas where you could stand before are suddenly unsafe. You can feel the tension in the air. It's a bit like when there is a thunderstorm coming – you can sense the atmosphere changing. It's a strange feeling.

There is no right or wrong place to stand – you have to judge each situation as you encounter it. Common sense comes into play as, for example, you want to avoid being isolated among the demonstrators. There used to be a sort of unwritten code of conduct among rioters in Northern Ireland and across the world in general towards the media. Pressmen and women would be seen as a no-go target, but this has gone out of the window and the press have become legitimate targets. It is more dangerous [to photograph in certain areas] now.

You can't have any preconceived notions

about the kind of pictures you might take. Sometimes you will be waiting for hours and nothing will happen, but action can flare up very quickly and be over in a matter of seconds. All you can do is be ready for whatever unfolds.

I'll generally have two cameras with me – one with a 70-200mm lens and the other with a wider lens, maybe a 16-35mm or a 24-70mm lens. I used a Canon EOS-1D Mark IV for this shot. There is a lot of running around so you can't carry lots of heavy lenses. There also isn't time to change lenses. I'll have my laptop in my backpack, so I can file the images to the news agency and anything else I might need while shooting, such as warm clothes. Events can last well into the night, and while it may be sunny in the morning it could be freezing by the early hours of the next day. Since events move quickly and people are constantly moving, you need to shoot at as fast a shutter speed as you can. I was

shooting at around 1/2000sec.

When there is a lull in the disturbances you have to judge whether you file the pictures you already have or wait until you have taken other pictures that [may better show what's going on]. I'll try to find a safe place, usually a doorway, to file the pictures but you have to be vigilant – if the disturbances move you don't want to be caught up in the middle of the riot.

As a press photographer, your role is to convey the drama of what is happening in front of you – the story on the day. There is no point coming back with a nice, beautifully lit picture and not an image of the policeman who has been set on fire, for example, because the policeman will be 'the picture'. If you're working for a news agency the 'news picture' always has to come first. You can take 'feature' pictures, too, but a strong news picture is always going to beat a feature-style picture onto the news pages the next day.



CATHAL MCNAUGHTON

Award-winning
Cathal McNaughton has more than ten years' experience covering conflicts and breaking news for national newspapers and international press agencies. He shares his best press photographs and reveals how he captures a subject in ways that others haven't seen

To see more images by Cathal or to book a place on one of his workshops visit www.cathalmcnaughton.com

To take part in a free street photography *Masterclass* with Cathal, send an email with your name, address, telephone number and a couple of sentences about your photographic interests and experience to ppicturedesk@ipcmmedia.com

Cathal McNaughton was talking to Gemma Padley

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Wildlife wonders

In the 47 years since its launch, the **Wildlife Photographer of the Year** competition has gone from strength to strength. **Jon Severs** finds out what makes it such an enduring competition and reveals some of the top images

IN 1965, *Animals* magazine launched a small competition for nature photographers that attracted just 600 entries. It was, perhaps a little grandly, called Wildlife Photographer of the Year. Forty-seven years later, that title is now more than justified. This year's competition, partnered as it has been since the 1980s with the Natural History Museum, attracted 48,000 entries from 98 countries, and the exhibition and book that showcase the winning photographs will be as global as the competition's reach, appearing in numerous international locations. In the words of renowned nature photographer and chair of this year's judges Jim Brandenburg, it is now 'the world's most important natural history competition'.

As has always been the case, the photography singled out for this year's Veolia Environnement Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition shows a diverse mix of techniques, subject matters and artistic interpretations. It also shows, however,

that in some ways nature photography has changed almost as much as the competition over the past half-century.

'Technology has enabled photographers to capture behaviour that was almost impossible before, because of the speed that digital capture gives you,' explains Rosamund Kidman Cox, who has been involved with the competition since 1981 and was on the judging panel this year. 'It has obviously revolutionised underwater photography as well.'

Daniel Beltrá, last year's overall winner for his photograph 'Still Life in Oil' (see page 24) and a judge this year, adds that the photography has also had to become more political.

'Nature photography used to tell us how beautiful the world was, but now it is underpinned by the fact that these beautiful things may not last,' he explains. 'The competition is a way of educating new photographers about photography, but it

'Secret Lives' by
Kai Fagerström

is also an amazing instrument to spread a message – once an image wins, it flies around the world. We have a short-term memory, but a competition like this can keep issues in mind.'

The competition is also much changed logically – by necessity. The huge scope for what can now be classed as nature photography is sectioned into 15 wide-ranging subject categories to ensure every type of wildlife photography can be represented. The youth competition is designed to nurture the next generation of talent – Bence Máté, for example, won the overall award in 2010 having previously won the Young Wildlife Photographer of the Year in 2002. For the 2012 competition, it was divided into age groups, but there are moves afoot to mirror more closely the adult category system in future years.

Whichever category you are in, the rules of submission remain tough: the competition accepts only raw files to rule out any foul play in terms of manipulation of images. Following the 2009 controversy where winner Jose Luis Rodriguez was stripped of his title, the judges are also now more aware of where an image has been set up. Rodriguez was accused of using a 'model' wolf hired for the image, an accusation he denied.

'We do also look for where the animal has been manipulated or is distressed because of what the photographer is doing,' says Kidman Cox. 'If the judges see evidence of that, the picture is disqualified.'

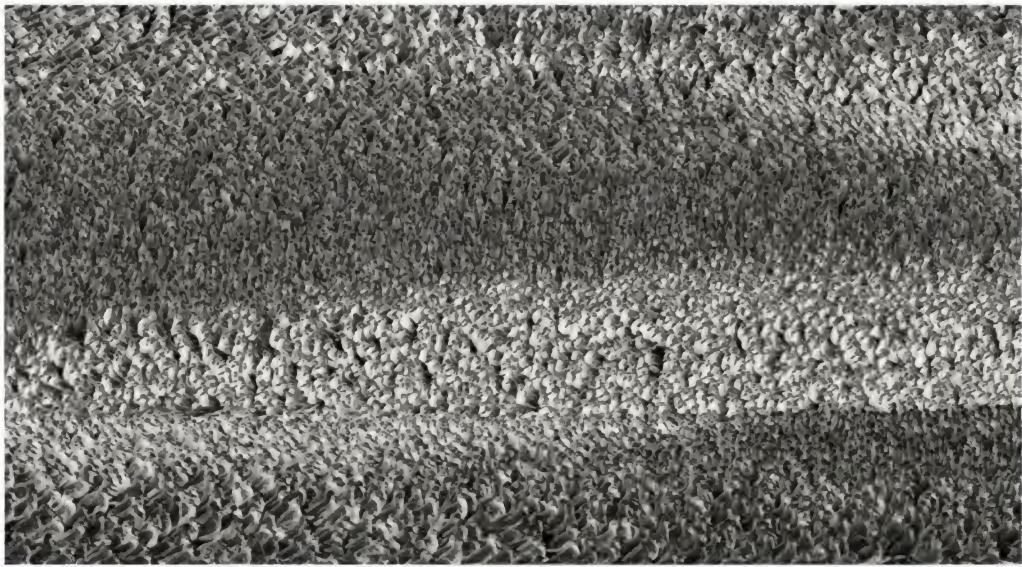
The competition is open to both amateurs and professionals and entries are judged anonymously in

order to give a level playing field. The judges stress that you don't need to have access to exotic animals or locations to stand a chance of winning.

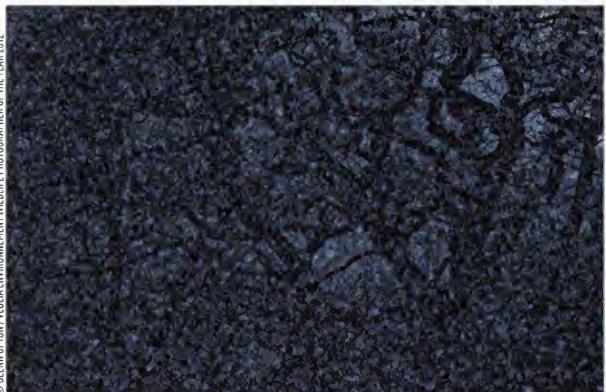
'Some of my favourite pictures are common sights,' says Kidman Cox. 'One of my favourite images from last year was of a robin. It had the most wonderful pose that said so much about it as an animal.'

There were certainly some fantastic images of UK domestic wildlife and nature submitted this year. Thomas Hanahoe's photograph of knots feeding in East Anglia (see right) was commended in the Nature in Black and White category, while Glen Upton-Fletcher was victorious in the Botanical Realms category with a snow-filled shot in Brock Valley, Lancashire (see below).

Of course, the exotic does make an appearance. In the Birds Behaviour category, Paul Nicklen was victorious with a chaotic image of penguins in Antarctica (see below),



© THOMAS HANAHOE / VELIA ENVIRONMENT WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2012



'Painting with Snow' by Glenn Upton

'You have to really research and know your subject, so you are ready for the lucky moment'

while the Mammal Behaviour category winner Grégoire Bouguereau captured hunting cheetahs in Tanzania (see bottom left).

Whichever wildlife or nature subject you pick, though, Kidman Cox explains that what is crucial to a great photograph is that you understand the subject as completely as possible.

'You have to really research and know your subject, and you have to plan extensively how you are going to take a photo,' she says. 'You have to have the knowledge so you are ready for the lucky moment – and know when and where it is most likely.'

Brandenburg agrees, adding: 'The harder you work, the luckier you get. However, a lot of photography is put down to luck when actually a lot of the time the photographer has dedicated his or her life to something. Sure, luck has a tiny part of it, but much more of a factor is the hard work, the planning and the understanding.'

This year, the judges singled out for commended status one such 'lucky' moment in the Birds Behaviour category, which was a photograph by Sergey Gorshkov of a snow goose protecting its eggs from an arctic fox (see right). 'This is a very good action shot of a rarely photographed situation,' commented judge Jari Peltomaki. 'The photographer has done really well to capture it at just the right moment.'

Kidman Cox says that knowing your subject also includes understanding one of the most critical parts of nature photography – lighting. 'You have to experiment with light to know how it works, so that when something happens you are aware where the light will be, and what impact shooting in a certain way will have on the light and, therefore, the image,' she explains.



'Bubble-Jetting Emperors' by Paul Nicklen



'Practice Run' by Grégoire Bouguereau



© PAUL NICKLEN / VELIA ENVIRONMENT WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2012

This can be seen to good effect in Adam Gibbs' image of a miniature Douglas fir (see right) which was commended in the Botanical Realms category. 'There's just the right amount of detail in the reflection here, and the subtle light highlighting the leaves and the mossy rock brings this image together,' said judge Neil Lucas.

Much of a person's success with light comes from their technical ability, and Kidman Cox says this is essential to get to the latter stages of the competition. 'When you judge a competition, sadly you are looking for reasons to knock out pictures, so technical skill is very important,' she admits.

That is not to say the judges are after clinical images that concentrate only on technical skill. In fact, quite the opposite is the case. But as Anna Henly, winner of this year's The World In Our Hands category with an image of a polar bear on fragmenting ice north of Norway (see

Left: 'A Wave of Knots' by Thomas Hanahoe



© ADAM GIBBS/NEWAU ENVIRONMENT WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2012

Right: 'Fairy Lake Fir' by Adam Gibbs

Below: 'The Duel' by Sergey Gorshkov



© SERGEY GORSHKOV/NEWAU ENVIRONMENT WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2012



© JIEL SARTORE / MELIA ENVIRONMENT WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2012



top right) explains, you have to know your camera inside out, otherwise you do the subject a disservice.

'You have to be completely natural with your camera to ensure you take advantage of the situation,' she says. 'For my shot of the polar bear this year, it was only there for five minutes so you shoot as many images as you can and try to be as creative as you can. You haven't got time to think about the technical aspect, so that has to be autopilot.'

Once the entries are reduced to those on the same technical level, the real competition can start. Brandenburg has his own hierarchy of credentials on which to judge, but he stresses each judge has their own view. 'It starts with aesthetics,' he explains. 'It could be the most literal, sharp image all the way to the most crazy abstract image – I can have the same reaction of aesthetic wonder and intrigue to all of those. Quickly behind aesthetic, though, is context. Is this a unique moment in nature, something no one has seen before?'

For Kidman Cox, originality is important. 'You should not try to replicate what has



© RICHARD PETERS / MELIA ENVIRONMENT WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2012



© ANNA HENLY / NATURE ENVIRONMENT WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2012

Above: 'Ice Matters' by Anna Henly



© ALEXANDER BADAEV / NATURE ENVIRONMENT WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2012

'Originality is important. You should not try to replicate what has gone before'

gone before,' she says. 'That does not mean you should not concentrate on a subject that has been photographed before – it just means you have to give the picture something extra.'

That extra can come in many different ways. Henly puts her success, both this year and in 2007 when she was highly commended for an image of an arctic fox, down to her way of shooting. 'They are both very feminine images – delicate and I think female in their interpretations,' she says. 'Photography is a bit of a boy's club, so perhaps I offer a slightly different way of looking at something.'

Yet it can be more literal than that. In the

Animals in their Environment category, Joel Sartore was commended for his image of a lion sitting, unusually, in a tree (see top left). 'It's a surprise – a lion in a tree,' says Kidman Cox. 'The effect is heightened by the golden spotlight on the waking male, set against the rich blue backdrop of early dawn.'

Likewise, for Richard Peters' commended image in the Mammals Behaviour category of a fox in Wyoming (see left), the originality came from an unusual crop. 'It's classic fox behaviour with an unconventional crop,' said judge Tom Schandy. 'It makes the picture different, standing out from all the perfect compositions we see over and over again.'

Spotting the original or most striking

photograph to send to a competition is not easy, though, as Kidman Cox explains. 'Sometimes you get attached to a picture, particularly in nature photography, because of the experience of taking it, because it was a wonderful day or a particular behaviour – but none of that necessarily means it is the best image,' she says. 'Get people to look and comment to help you make the decision.'

Brandenburg adds that, while the conservation message is now central to the competition ethos, when taking or choosing a photograph it should not be the first thing you consider. 'If it is a wonderful photograph, the likelihood is that,

Above: 'Lion in the Spotlight' by Joel Sartore

Left: 'Snow Pounce' by Richard Peters

Far right: 'Midnight Snack' by Alexander Badyaev



© JASPER DOEST / VEOIA ENVIRONMENT WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2012



© REMO SAVISAAR / VEOIA ENVIRONMENT WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2012

as it is a photograph of nature, it will have a conservation impact,' he says. 'So the first question has to be, is it aesthetically good, then is it technically good, and only then the conservation message comes in.'

Manage to do all of these things and you are in with a chance of claiming the £10,000 top prize, and a place on an exhibition touring globally and an appearance in the commemorative book.

However, not winning should not be viewed as a waste of your time, says Kidman Cox. Entering the competition, she says, will improve your photography by making you analyse your work and your methodology. Both Brandenburg, a past winner in 1988 of the top award and now an AP contributor to *Photo Insight*, and Beltrá, add that the personal glory of winning also comes second to the ability to give a higher profile to the subject you are photographing.

'If I could have made the tiniest bit of difference through my photographs to the fate of the wolves or the prairies that I have spent much of my career photographing, if I could change the public's attitude just marginally, then that would be the ultimate reward for me,' says Brandenburg.

That sentiment is the competition in a nutshell: yes, it is a photography competition, but in every element, from the image being taken to the judging process and the eventual decision about a winner, the wildlife comes first. If there is one thing any photographer entering has to remember, it is that.

Top: 'Relaxation' by Jasper Doest

Above: 'Winter Counterpoint' by Remo Savisaar

A WINNER'S STORY

Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2011 winner Daniel Beltrá explains how he took his winning shot

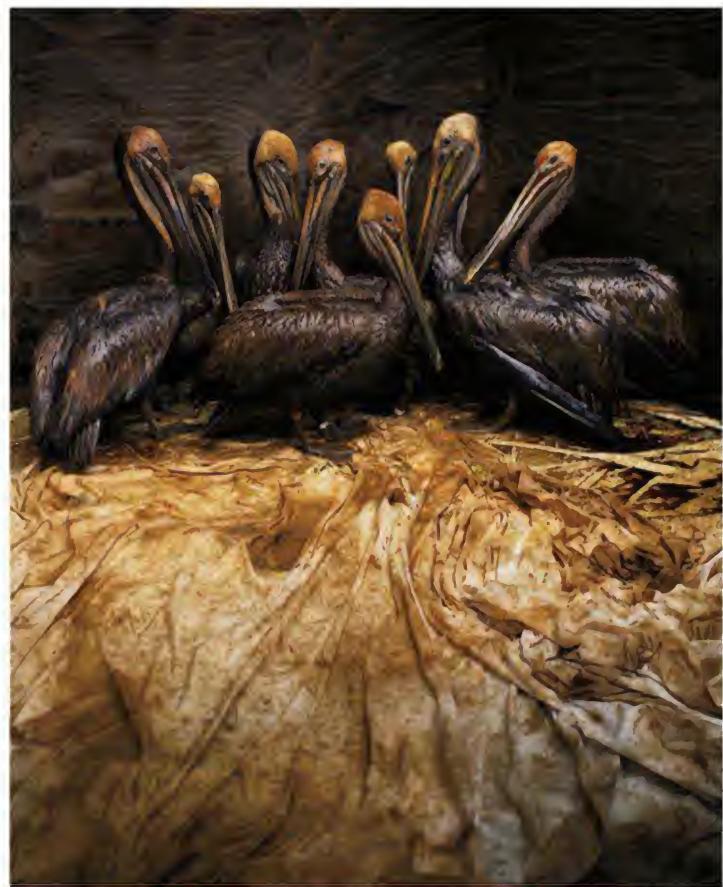
I WAS working on the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico with Greenpeace and I knew photographing the animals was going to be a very important part of the work. I often photograph from the air, but that is so abstract and it can be very beautiful. What I knew I needed was something more brutal, a real punch to the stomach – a call to reality of what this spill really meant.

I went to the bird rescue centre in Louisiana. The facility had these wooden crates with a mesh roof where they housed the birds. The first stage of the cleaning is to spray the birds with a solution that breaks down the heavy oil, which then drips off onto the white sheets beneath them.

As I did not want to disturb the birds, when they took a bird in or took one out, they opened the door and that was my opportunity to take a photograph quickly. I had only five or six seconds. Then I had to wait for the next bird to be removed or put back for another opportunity.

I was not allowed to use a tripod, or any artificial lighting, so it was all natural light and handheld. I stayed there all morning, waiting until I felt I had something good enough. This image was shot at around ISO 800 and at around 1/30sec, so it was very difficult to shoot.

Compositionally, the birds huddled in the corner as the door opened and the stained sheets gathered on the floor produced a striking image – I just had to capture it. I started shooting horizontally, but within four or five frames I knew it would work better as a vertical image. The oil on the sheets had to be part of the story.



© DANIEL BELTRÁ / GREENPEACE / VEOIA ENVIRONMENT WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

The winners of the 2012 competition are announced on 17 October, and the exhibition begins at the Natural History Museum on 19 October. Entries for the 2013 Veolia Environment Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition opens on 17 December 2012 and closes on 22 February 2013. Visit www.nhm.ac.uk for more details

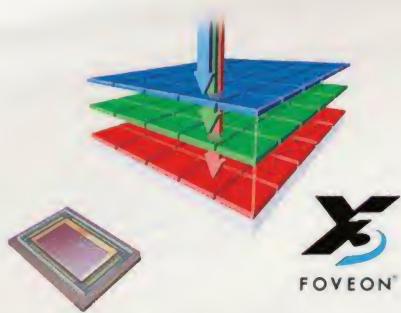
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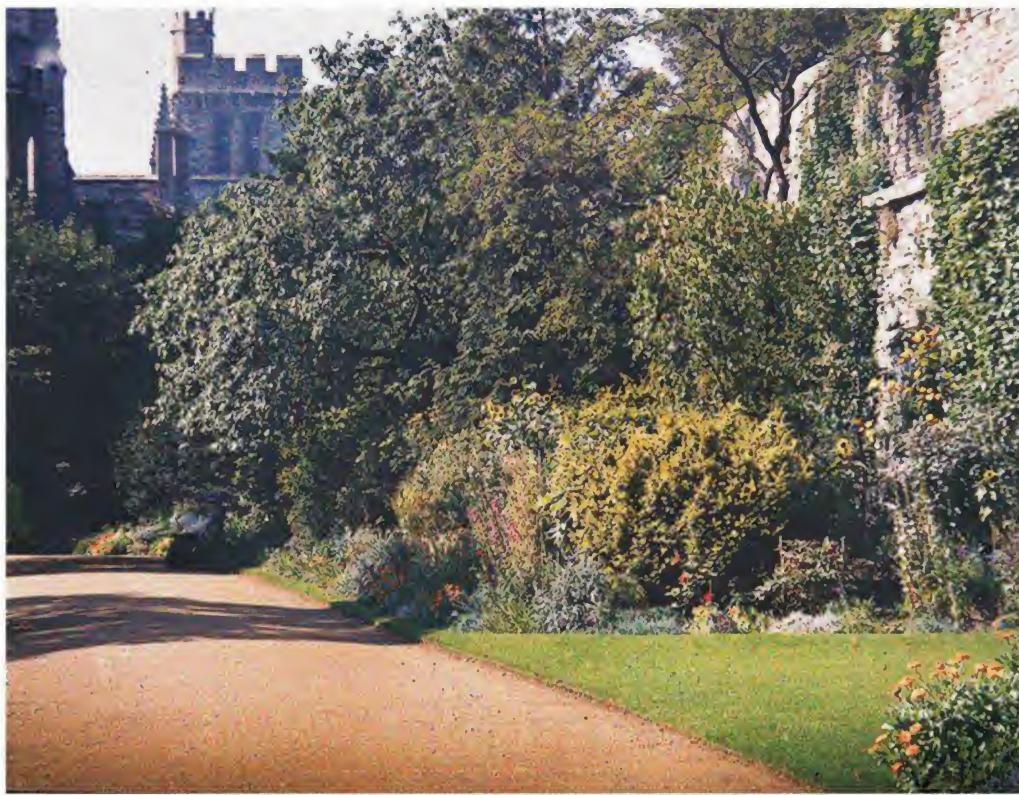
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Miss Acland's endeavours

Jon Stapley looks at a new publication of images of little known colour-photography pioneer **Sarah Angelina Acland**

THOUGH history has perhaps not given her full credit, Sarah Angelina Acland (1849–1930) was one of the pioneers of colour photography, a woman of enormous drive and intellect whose experiments with what would become known as the 'Sanger Shepherd process' led her to make great advances in this new, uncertain field and produce some of the first full-colour prints. More than 200 of her ground-breaking works have been collected and published in Giles Hudson's enormously comprehensive volume *Sarah Angelina Acland: First Lady of Colour Photography*, and the result is a magnificent work of history and biography.

Miss Acland, as the book respectfully refers to her, had her first exposure to photography at the tender age of five, when a portrait of her and her brothers was taken by a novice Oxford photographer named Charles Dodgson, who would eventually become rather better known for his writing career under the pen name Lewis Carroll. The Aclands were the second group of children to pose for Mr Dodgson's camera, the first being their good friends Ina, Edith and Alice Liddell, the latter of whom would later inspire that famous journey down the rabbit hole. Despite this early brush with celebrity, Miss Acland didn't pick up photography herself until the age of forty-two. Although a childhood illness had

left her in frequent need of a wheelchair, she retained a healthy and vital sense of ambition and discovery that would be kindled by science and astronomy and later propel her into photography.

The book provides a detailed and fascinating insight into the culture of photography when Miss Acland was taking her first steps into it. Female photographers, for instance, were still a rare breed, so much so that in 1884 the editor of the very first issue of a presumably short-lived rag called *Amateur Photographer* remarked that they were 'like the guests at a well-arranged dinner party, numbering more than the Graces and less than the Muses.' Regardless, Miss Acland soon became quite the notable face in amateur photography at the time, giving numerous lectures and having her work frequently exhibited.

Ever the scientist, Miss Acland would devote most of her photographic career to solving the problem of printing in colour. Though the technical terms involved with the processes almost threaten to overwhelm the reader, Hudson is enough of a storyteller that it never stops being interesting. From the initial scorn heaped on the 'true translation of colour twaddle' by the *Photographic Journal*, to the gradually increasing support for these new processes among the photographic community, it

feels vicariously rewarding to see Miss Acland's dedication and commitment pay off. Though she isn't as remembered today as contemporaries Julia Margaret Cameron or Edward Sanger Shepherd, the portrait Hudson paints is of a woman who wouldn't care. She seems more concerned with the art and the science than personal recognition, and even if history has been slow to recognise her contributions (as the book claims), Miss Acland seems like she would be content that her work was able to advance photography to such a degree.

After the story of Miss Acland's extraordinary life has concluded, the latter two thirds of the book are taken up with examples of her photography, and it is richly and endlessly fascinating. What arrests throughout is the quality of her composition. Though to use words like 'gift' or 'talent' is to cheapen decades of hard work and practice, it's hard not to see these intriguing, well-balanced photos as the work of someone who just has a knack for it. Miss Acland understands how a winding path can lead the eye through an image, or how placing a subject off-centre produces a much more interesting photograph. Her portraiture too is always sure-handed, and it feels as though she was accomplished at putting subjects at ease, from members of her family to then-Prime Minister William Gladstone.

Any photographer knows that cameras, techniques and technologies will always be improving, and this book is a fitting testimony to how much one determined person can contribute to that. As a window into photography of yesteryear, a story of a fascinating life, or just a really great series of photos, this is definitely recommended. *AP*

Above: The colours of this peaceful summer scene represent the fruition of years of hard work by Sarah Acland and her photographic contemporaries

Right: Miss Acland, with a dog and Portuguese guitar, in one of her self-portraits from the early 20th Century, taken on an Autochrome plate



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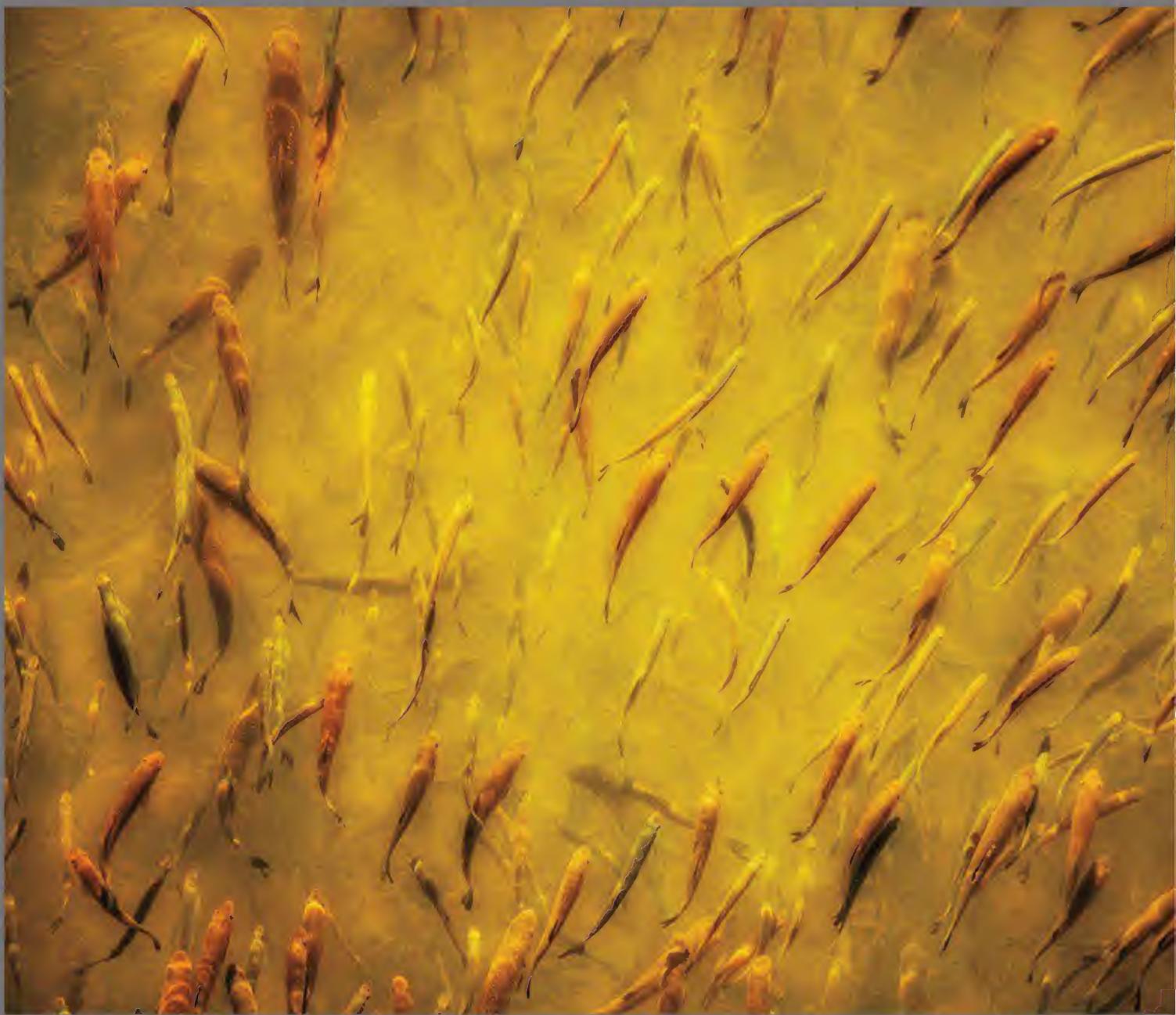
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2nd
PRIZE



Andrew Blake Scarborough
44pts

Canon EOS 400D, 70-300mm,
1/640sec at f/22, ISO 1600

♦ 'Three Toes' **Judges say** The soft focus and strong light have given this shot by Andrew a near fairytale quality. The three floating feathers are a particularly nice touch





1st
PRIZE



Dusica Paripovic Prijedor 45pts

Nikon D5000, 55-200mm 4-5.6 VR, 1/160sec at f/4.8, ISO 100

◆ 'Shoal' **Judges say** This unusual and abstract image immediately stood out due to its striking golden hue and fascinating subject. It's easy for the eye to get lost within the shoal of fish making it an endlessly fascinating photograph

3rd
PRIZE



Chris Bestwick

Lancashire 43pts

Samsung GX20, 70-300mm, 1/15sec at f/8, ISO 200

◆ 'Flock' **Judges say** Chris has pressed the shutter at exactly the right moment to capture this appealing composition. Shooting at 1/15sec has given the birds just the right amount of blur to add a sense of direction and speed



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APOY 2012 Amateur Photographer OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

Wildlife at Home or Abroad

Find out who's leading the title race as we reveal the top 30 images for **Round 8** of APOY

Dusica Paripovic, of Prijedor in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is the winner of our Wildlife at Home or Abroad round round of APOY 2012. Dusica will receive a Samsung NX20 with 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 kit lens, Samsung 50-200mm f/4-5.6 and Samsung 16mm f/2.4 ultra-wide lenses, plus a 16GB SDHC Plus memory card, worth a total of £1,496.99. The NX20 is an advanced compact system camera with a 20.3-million-pixel, APS-C, CMOS sensor. It has 8fps continuous shooting, built-in Wi-Fi for email, social networking and transfer, an ISO range of 100-12,800 and a top shutter speed of 1/8000sec. Samsung's slender, all-purpose i-Function 16mm lens offers great versatility, with easy one-touch access to all your camera's manual settings.

Our second-placed winner is **Andrew Blake**, of Scarborough, who will receive a Samsung WB850F compact camera and a 16MB SDHC Plus memory card worth a total of £348.99. The WB850F travel compact has a 16-million-pixel, BSI (Back Side Illuminated) CMOS sensor to help reduce image noise and distortion, even in low-light conditions, and a 21x optical zoom lens (23-483mm equivalent). The Samsung WB850F also has built-in Wi-Fi connectivity, so users can email photos and share them quickly and easily.

Chris Bestwick, of Lancashire, finished third in the round and wins a £250 Jessops Gift Card.

THE 2012 LEADER BOARD

After Round 8's judging, Dan Deakin is 53 points ahead of second-placed Andrew Blake, who moves up from sixth. Charles Spencer has moved down from second to third, while Nino Cannizzaro moves up one place from fifth to fourth. There are three new new entries into our top ten with Eden Breitz, Derek Hansen and Chris Bestwick.

1	Dan Deakin	229pts	6	Adrian Sadlier	129pts
2	Andrew Blake	176pts	7	Alf Bailey	121pts
3	Charles Spencer	160pts	8	Eden Breitz	118pts
4	Nino Cannizzaro	152pts	9	Derek Hansen	111pts
5	Ben Ghibaldan	135pts	10	Chris Bestwick	110pts

The UK's most prestigious competition for amateur photographers

4 Michael Marsh Brazil 42pts

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 24-105mm, 1/100sec at f/8, ISO 1000

St James' Park **Judges say** Strong tonal contrasts and excellent framing make this an image that rewards repeated viewing



5 Samane Nafissi North Yorkshire 42pts

Canon PowerShot SX20IS, 5-100mm, 1/160sec at f/8, ISO 200

'Kiss on the Water' **Judges say** This amusing image adopts a fantastic angle to capture the fish's reflection as it rises to the surface for food

6 Bill Sell Llanelli 41pts

Nikon D100, 70-210mm, 1/640 sec at f5.6, ISO 200

In Flight **Judges say** This tranquil and absorbing image transforms a common scene into a shot that bleeds colour and atmosphere

7 John Chesham Bristol 41pts

Canon EOS 1D, 300mm, 1/400sec at f/4, ISO 400

'Harris Hawk Fly Pass' **Judges say** Capturing birds in flight is no easy task but John has captured this hawk brilliantly. The abstract background is a real bonus

8 Antonio Oliveria Lisbon, Portugal 41pts

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 24-104mm, f/11 at 1/25, ISO 400

'Frog in a Bucket' **Judges say** The scale is the interesting element here as we see just how small the frog is compared to the bucket

9 Anne Frigon Vancouver 40pts

Canon EOS 60D, 70-300mm, 1/15sec at f/22, ISO 100

Wildebeest **Judges say** Anne has created a painterly scene of these wildebeest simply by employing a slower shutter speed

10 Bruce Marshall Belfast 39pts

Canon EOS 7D, 17-85mm, 1/100sec at f/5.6, ISO 6400

'Free Flight' **Judges say** The contrast of the bird's white feathers against the unit background ensures the viewer's eye is anchored to the main subject



11 Farrah Chandra Bristol 38pts

Canon EOS 7D, 70-300mm, 1/800sec at f/5.6, ISO 1000

'Assassin' **Judges say** Farrah's image of a water bird carries with it an air of eastern serenity particularly in its use of stark monochrome

12 Brett Gardner Lincolnshire 38pts

Nikon D200, 105mm, 1/125sec at f/8, ISO 200

Broad bodied chaser **Judges say** This dragonfly is a seriously impressive specimen and the background light is beautiful



13 Stuart Neilson Cork City 38pts

Nikon D50, 35mm, 1/250sec at f/4

'Bubbles' **Judges say** This discarded shell makes for a genuinely brilliant subject, particularly against the indistinct background and soft light

14 Nino Cannizzaro Palermo, Italy 37pts

Canon EOS 30D, 55-200mm, 200mm, 1/1000sec at f5.6, ISO 100

'Horses' **Judges say** These horses are given an almost mythical quality by the striking lighting and strong tonal range

15 Keith Aggett Newton Abbot 36pts

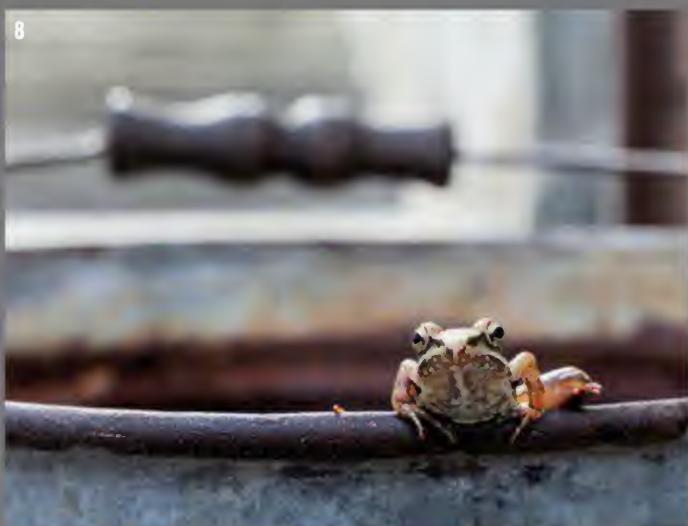
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 24-105mm, 0.8secs at f/13, ISO 100

'Birds on the Water' **Judges say** This serene tableau makes fantastic use of the natural misty conditions and near opaque shape of the birds

16 Raymond Tambunan Illinois 36pts

Nikon D5100, 55-300mm, 1/160sec at f/5.6, ISO 400

Street hog **Judges say** Raymond has captured this orang-utan appearing almost despondent. The monochrome works particularly well with the wooden hut



The UK's most prestigious competition for amateur photographers

17 Weng Lim Kent 35pts

Canon EOS 1D, 300mm, 1/1250sec at f/4, ISO 800

Wild osprey **Judges say** This image captures the power of this bird. To be able to capture it in flight is most impressive

17



18 Neil MacGregor Glasgow 34pts

Nikon D700, 200-400mm, 1/250sec at f/5.6, ISO 400

'Kingfisher In The Rain' **Judges say** There's something nicely traditional about Neil's image of a kingfisher

19 Ben Ghibaldan Middlesex 33pts

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 300mm, 1/250sec at f/5, ISO 400

Bird of prey **Judges say** Most bird portraits are shot in profile but here Ben has chosen to shoot face on and it is all the more effective for it

20 Brian Stoddart Kent 33pts

Canon EOS 7D, 100-300mm, 1/1250sec at f/4, ISO 640

Otters **Judges say** This dramatic scene reveals these otherwise loveable creatures to be aggressive and territorial

21 Derek Hansen Kent 32pts

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 24-105mm, 1/800sec at f/4, ISO 200

Little owl **Judges say** Derek has used chiaroscuro lighting to create a foreboding and gothic image

18



19



22 Paweł Pentlinowski Co Wicklow 32pts

Nikon D300, 18-200mm, 1/500sec at f/5.6, ISO 200

Fox in the garden **Judges say** This perfectly timed shot has caught this curious fox staring directly into the lens of Paweł's camera

23 Bruce Jones Florida 32pts

Pentax K-5, 90mm, 1/30sec f/9, ISO 400

Red-eyed tree frog **Judges say** This pinsharp image revels in the vivid physical colours of this tiny red-eyed tree frog

24 Herbert Freedman West Java 31pts

Nikon D70, 55-200mm, 1/250sec at f/6.3, ISO 400

'Play' **Judges say** It may take a couple viewings to really work this shot out but once revealed it's difficult not to be captivated

25 Hamish Smith Somerset 30pts

Canon EOS 1D Mark IV, 70-200mm, 1/1000sec at f/3.2, ISO 1250

Juvenile Ural owl **Judges say** Owls in flight have been captured many times but here Hamish has caught the owl in a pin sharp and appealing composition

20



26 Margaret Jones Western Cape 29pts

Nikon D2X, 18-200mm, 1/500sec at f/10, ISO 200

Ostrich chick **Judges say** The hatching egg was cropped and moved to a black background to signify a new life emerging from the darkness

27 Jay Heiser Virginia 28pts

Canon EOS 5D, 100mm, 1/60sec at f/5, ISO 800

'Spring Peeper' **Judges say** The angle, depth of focus and soft reflection all come together to create a genuinely lovely shot

28 Avinash Mewada Mumbai 27pts

Fujifilm FinePix HS10, 18-55mm, 1/320sec at f/5.6, ISO 100

City lake **Judges say** Avinash's image is beautifully composed and framed. It's a nicely lit and romantic image

29 Bill McKenzie Hampshire 26pts

Camera EOS 5D, 24-105mm, 1/200sec at f/5.6, ISO 200

'Keeping Cool' **Judges say** This shot of a stag cooling itself on a hot day uses the reflection to balance the composition

30 Adam Philips Cardiff 26pts

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, 70-200mm, 1/640 sec at f/2.8, ISO 100

Ring-tailed Lemur **Judges say** This lemur has been caught in the act of grabbing for food. It's a simple yet nicely observed scene



21



Amateur Photographer's... ICONS OF PHOTOGRAPHY ICONIC PHOTOGRAPH | PHOTOGRAPHER | CAMERA

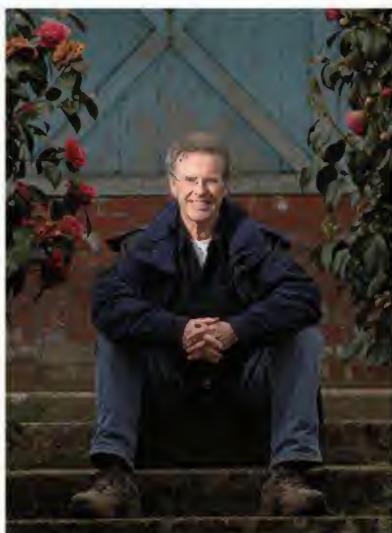
Jimi Hendrix, 1967

Gered Mankowitz initially felt his first photo session with Jimi Hendrix was a failure. Now one of the images he shot is an iconic rock portrait, writes **David Clark**

JIMI HENDRIX was one of the great rock stars of the 1960s, a gifted singer-songwriter with charismatic stage presence and a groundbreaking approach to playing the electric guitar. However, when the 24-year-old Hendrix walked into Gered Mankowitz's photographic studio in February 1967, his brief but meteoric career had barely begun.

The Seattle-born musician had arrived in London in September 1966 with his new manager, the former Animals bass player Chas Chandler. Chandler soon teamed him up with bassist Noel Redding and drummer Mitch Mitchell to form the Jimi Hendrix Experience. By February 1967, the band had released a single, 'Hey Joe', which peaked at number six in the charts.

Mankowitz, although just 20 at the time, was already established as a music photographer with his own studio in Mason's Yard in London's West End. He had shot album covers including the Rolling Stones' *Between the Buttons* and had toured America with the Stones two years before.



Three months earlier, Chandler had arranged for Hendrix to perform for members of the press and music industry representatives at the Bag o' Nails club in London. Mankowitz was introduced to Hendrix at the club and soon afterwards arrangements were made for him to shoot a photo session with the band.

'At that time,' Mankowitz recalls, 'Jimi hadn't consolidated any sort of success, although we all thought he was absolutely phenomenal and extraordinary-looking. Although he was wild and extrovert on stage, off stage he was rather sweet and modest, and funny in a quiet and self-effacing way. He was a very charming, polite and laid-back person to be with.'

'My brief was to create a photograph that created a defining image of Jimi at that moment; one that could be used to put on a single or sheet music cover, poster or advert.'

For the shoot, Mankowitz used a Hasselblad 500C medium-format camera with a 50mm lens (roughly equivalent to a 28mm lens on a 35mm camera). He was using black & white film. The first part of the shoot was done using a white background (see contact sheet, page 36) but Mankowitz soon changed it to grey.

The initial shots in the session showed all three band members. Mankowitz recalls that Mitch Mitchell had a sweet and boyish face, and the others kept laughing when he tried to look mean and sexy. During this part of the shoot, Hendrix wore a vintage Hussars military jacket with various additions of his own. The jacket had been bought from a shop in Portobello Road named I Was Lord Kitchener's Valet.

'Jimi took to the fashion of the time like a duck to water,' says Mankowitz. 'Everything that was current at that moment just looked as though it had been created for him. He just threw it together and it looked fabulous.'

The first 11 images of the

Left: Gered Mankowitz, photographed by University College Falmouth Students

This image: Jimi Hendrix, Mason's Yard, London, 1967





PHOTOGRAPH BY GERED MANKOWITZ © BONNIE LTD 2012/MANKOWITZ.COM

'It has become my signature image. I feel terribly lucky to have had the opportunity to take an image that has become so famous'

 shoot showed the band in various formations, but the last frame on the roll shows Hendrix alone. Mankowitz was shooting slightly above eye-level and Hendrix was facing the camera with his hands on his hips. Its impact comes from the simplicity and directness of the image, together with Hendrix's powerful appearance and the symmetry of the pose. Mankowitz's choice of lens was also a factor in the picture's success.

'I loved using the 50mm lens because it gives you that marvellous perspective without appearing to be distorted,' he says. 'In this shot it pushes the hips back and makes him look a little narrower. I wasn't overly conscious of cropping the head, because I was very focused on the eyes and trying to draw the viewer into the subject's face. I felt that just cropping the top of the head made the image more dynamic.'

This was the only frame from the entire shoot that showed Hendrix by himself against a white background. 'Either I was super-confident and felt that I'd got the shot I wanted in one frame, or I was just incredibly lucky,' he says.

However, his initial feelings about the portrait session were not positive. 'Although my pictures had a considerable amount of use during the "Hey Joe" period and the build-up to the first album, I didn't feel they were a huge success,' he says.

'I was hoping that one of the pictures would be on the cover of the band's first album [*Are You Experienced*, released in May 1967]. However, because I was pig-headed and opinionated enough to want to do my

session in black & white, because I thought it was a more dignified and serious format in which to present him, I didn't shoot any colour. And when it came down to the cover, the record company insisted that they have a colour photograph.

'So although he was lovely and looked fantastic and I was thrilled to work with him, in an odd way I felt a bit of a failure over that session because the band went on to shoot the cover with another photographer.'

Mankowitz photographed the band again six weeks later because Redding and Mitchell had permed their hair and Chas Chandler wanted updated pictures. Hendrix's appearance had also undergone some refinement. 'He had already begun to lose that wild, untamed and rather unsophisticated look,' he says. 'The clothes were all made for him and they'd lost that fantastic spontaneity. So I was privileged to photograph him before he changed. He was at his best in the first session.'

Hendrix went on to have worldwide success with songs including 'Purple Haze' and 'The Wind Cries Mary'. However, his life was brought to a tragically premature end when he died as the result of a drugs overdose in September 1970.

Mankowitz went on to have a successful photographic career specialising in portraits of rock stars, but the Hendrix portrait remains his favourite. 'I love it,' he says. 'I'm very proud of it. It has a life of its own and consequently it's become my signature image. Looking at it today, I feel terribly lucky to have had the opportunity to take an image that has become so famous.' **AP**

Contact sheet of the first roll of film in the Jimi Hendrix shoot

BOOKS & WEBSITES

Books: Mankowitz's book on his Jimi Hendrix portrait sessions, *The Experience: Jimi Hendrix at Mason's Yard*, is available from www.insighteditions.com. His recent book on the Rolling Stones, *Rolling Stones: One on One*, is also available from the same website.

Websites: Gered Mankowitz's official website, www.mankowitz.com, includes a range of his work, including more images from the Jimi Hendrix sessions. A video of Mankowitz talking about photographing Hendrix can be seen on www.youtube.com.

Events of 1967

14 April

In San Francisco, more than 10,000 people march in protest against American involvement in the Vietnam War

28 April

World heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali refuses to take part in military service in Vietnam. He is stripped of his title and is refused a licence to box in the US for three years

28 May

Sir Francis Chichester arrives in Plymouth after becoming the first person to sail around the world single-handed by the clipper route, in his yacht, *Gipsy Moth IV*

1 June

The Beatles release their landmark album, *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. It remains at the top of the album charts through what has become known as the 'Summer of Love'

25 June

The first live international satellite TV programme, *Our World*, is broadcast to around 400 million viewers. It includes a live performance by The Beatles singing 'All You Need is Love'

30 September

Official launch date for BBC radio stations Radio 1, Radio 2, Radio 3 and Radio 4

18 October

Anti-Vietnam War demonstrations at the University of Wisconsin-Madison result in 76 people being injured

3 December

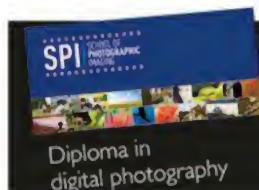
Cardiac surgeon Christiaan Barnard carries out the world's first human-to-human heart transplant in Cape Town, South Africa

Improve your photography



'I started with the SPI Foundation in Photography in 2009 and learned so much from this course. I always look forward to getting feedback from my tutors and I am currently completing the Foundation in Digital Imaging Techniques course.' Ross Mackenzie

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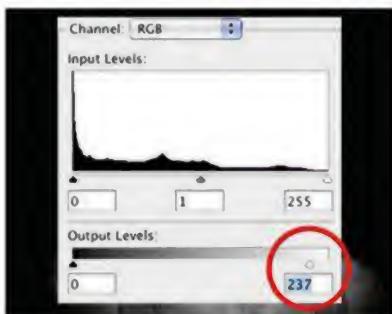
Expert advice, help and tips from AP Editor Damien Demolder



Original



Green channel



Too sharp



Corrected

Bode Olaleye Kickboxer

Canon EOS 500D, 17-70mm,
1/60sec at f/3.2, ISO 100

BODE has sent me a collection of portraits of a friend of his, and I've picked this side-lit and mysterious shot to work on. I like the picture, but feel there could be a little more texture and manliness about it. I'm going to use a similar technique to the one I used on Darrell's shot (see opposite page), but here I'm selecting the green channel to make my black & white layer as it contains the most detail and it shows the texture of the skin. The blue channel is also very good for portraits of rugged men, but on this occasion it proved too dark.

I made the black & white version and then dropped it on top of the original. I then copied the original and dropped that on top of the black & white version, and used the Color blending mode to pour the original colour over the tones of the black & white image. I then used the opacity slider to slightly fade the colour to a more subtle level. I wanted to restrict the brightest tones on the subject's forehead, so I selected the black & white layer and used the highlight output slider in Levels to draw the white level to 237.

Bode has applied some pretty harsh



sharpening that has made edges crispy and haloed. Once the image was flattened, I applied a 1-pixel radius of Gaussian blur, which I faded to the Darken mode to fill in the white edges.

This is a nice portrait, and I like the pose and lighting, so Bode wins picture of the week.

PICTURE
OF THE
WEEK

'I like the picture, but there could be a little more texture and manliness about it'



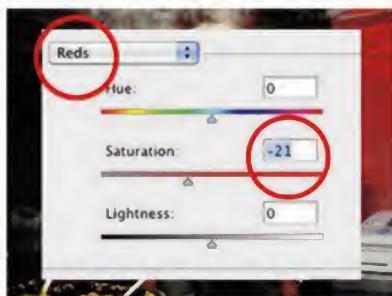
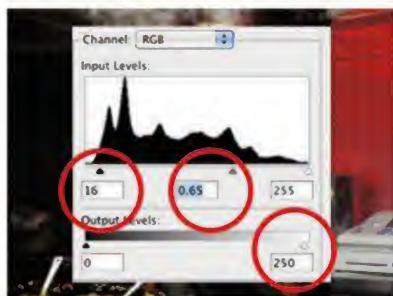
WIN

Every reader* whose picture appears in *Appraisal* will win a Manfrotto Unica VII Messenger Bag worth £84.95. This bag combines style and functionality, ensuring that it is the perfect companion for carrying your camera gear, laptop and personal items. Gain quick access to your DSLR with lens attached, laptop and personal effects in the upper compartment by using the top opening. An additional compartment in the base of the bag also provides storage for selected Manfrotto Compact Photo Tripods.

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your
pictures**

Send up to six prints, slides or images on CD (please include the original files from the camera along with your submitted versions on your CD). Tell us about the pictures and include details of equipment used and exposure settings. Send your images to *Appraisal* at the address on page 3. Enclose an SAE if you want them returned



Darrell Perrins Paella man

Olympus Pen E-PL2, 45mm,
1/100sec at f/1.8, ISO 320

DARRELL shot this interesting man at a music and 'beer drinking' festival called Bunkfest, with his Olympus E-PL2 and a 45mm lens. He used it wide open at f/1.8, which allowed a shutter speed of 1/100sec, but while the focal length and shutter speed conform to the usual camera-shake protection rules, obviously a pile of real ale played havoc with Darrell's ability to hold a camera still. Even through the softness of the backlit steam, we can see there is quite a lot of shake – and camera shake is one problem a picture can never recover from, unless it is used at postage-stamp size.

Darrell has created his own black & white version of the image, and has used Photoshop to clone out the bright canvas strap in the background. This version works quite well, though it lacks contrast.

The problem with the original is that the background is too prominent and the man's face is too light – basically, the exposure is wrong. I thought it would be interesting to combine Darrell's black & white version with the original colour version, and I've dropped the black & white on top of the colour as a new layer. I switched the layer blending-mode to Overlay to let the colour show through. The image is still too light, so using Levels just on the colour layer, I deepened the shadows, dragged the midtones darker and then pulled the highlights in to 250 using the highlight output slider.

To finish things off, I increased the colour

saturation in general, but then reduced the saturation of reds, and used the Burn tool to darken sections of the background – including that strap. I then cropped it square.

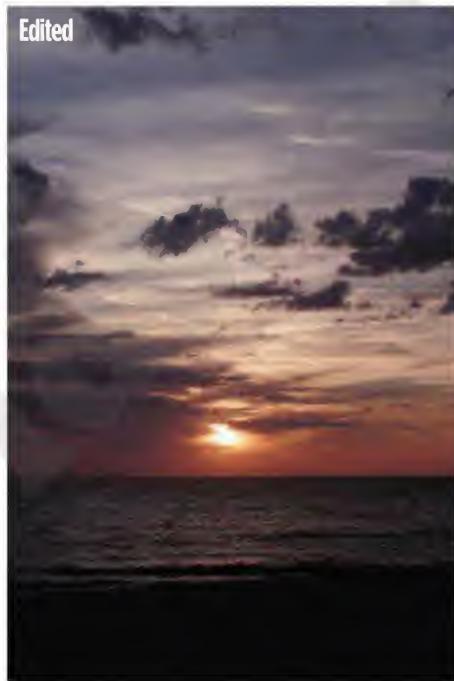
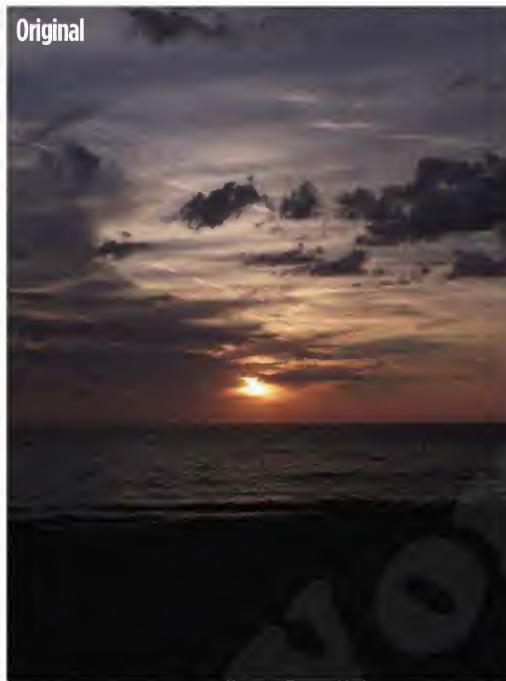
The final image, though still fuzzy from camera shake, is much more dramatic than either the original or the black & white version, and it is a bit more attention-grabbing.

Jim Cullen Sunset at John's Pass

Fujifilm FinePix S2750HD, 12.3mm,
1/150sec at f/8, ISO 64

CAMERAS don't really like sunsets. The brightness of the sun causes the metering system to believe that it is dealing with a bright scene, and so the camera closes the aperture to render the whole scene too dark.

Fixing this post-capture is easy enough. I used Levels to open the midtones and create a better black, and then Curves to add some contrast and lighten the lighter tones a little more. This adds definition to the clouds and has saturated the colours above the horizon. I then adjusted the hue of the whole scene to draw in a little more red, and cropped the image to get rid of some of the dense and blank foreground, and to make the shot a long, thin 3:2 shot instead of the square and dumpy 4:3 proportions that Jim's camera gives him. It's a nice shot – Jim just needs to take control of his camera a little more, and learn to use exposure compensation.



Transform your photography

Join AP and WDC experts **Damien Demolder, Nigel Atherton** and Photoshop guru **Philip Andrews** for a full day of photographic instruction and fast-track photographic inspiration at the fantastic Blue Fin Building on the South Bank, London SE1. Learn insider secrets from our award-winning editorial teams and photo experts to motivate and inspire you to take better pictures. Gain invaluable knowledge from other delegates' achievements and challenges during our popular photo-critiquing sessions throughout the day, with demonstrations to show key techniques. Plus, Philip Andrews shows you how to use Photoshop and Lightroom to enhance your images

Highlights include: Exposure, Street photography skills, Learning to use Levels properly, Editing raw, Metering, Photoshop skills, Composition, Lightroom skills, Framing, Marketing your images, DSLR video techniques, Critique session advice

To be held on Friday 16 November 2012 in the Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU

Itinerary

09.30	Welcome registration	Tea/coffee
10.00	Brain vs camera	Be better than your metering system
11.00	Brain vs camera Q&A	Presented by Damien Demolder
11.15	Creative composition	Presented by Nigel Atherton
11.30	Tips for shooting DSLR video	Presented by Nigel Atherton
11.45	Tea & coffee break	
12.00	Lighting - Natural light	Presented by Damien Demolder
12.35	Lighting - Studio light	Presented by Andrew Sydenham
13.00	Lighting demo Q&A	
13.15	Lunch	
14.15	Every image needs Photoshop	How you can use Lightroom and Photoshop to carry out essential edits
15.15	Every image needs Photoshop Q&A	Presented by Philip Andrews
15.30	Make cash from your photos	Presented by Matt Golowczynski and Michael Topham
16.00	Final Q&As to the panel and audience photo critique session	
16.30	Chat with the experts over a glass of wine	
17.30	Ends	

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EMAIL us at spiadmin@ipcmedia.com with the words '**16 NOVEMBER SEMINAR**' in the subject line. Please include your name, address and telephone number. **POST** a cheque for £120, made payable to 'IPC Media Ltd', to Estelle Hicks-Bennett, SPI Seminar, Room 08-E4-05, IPC Media, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU.

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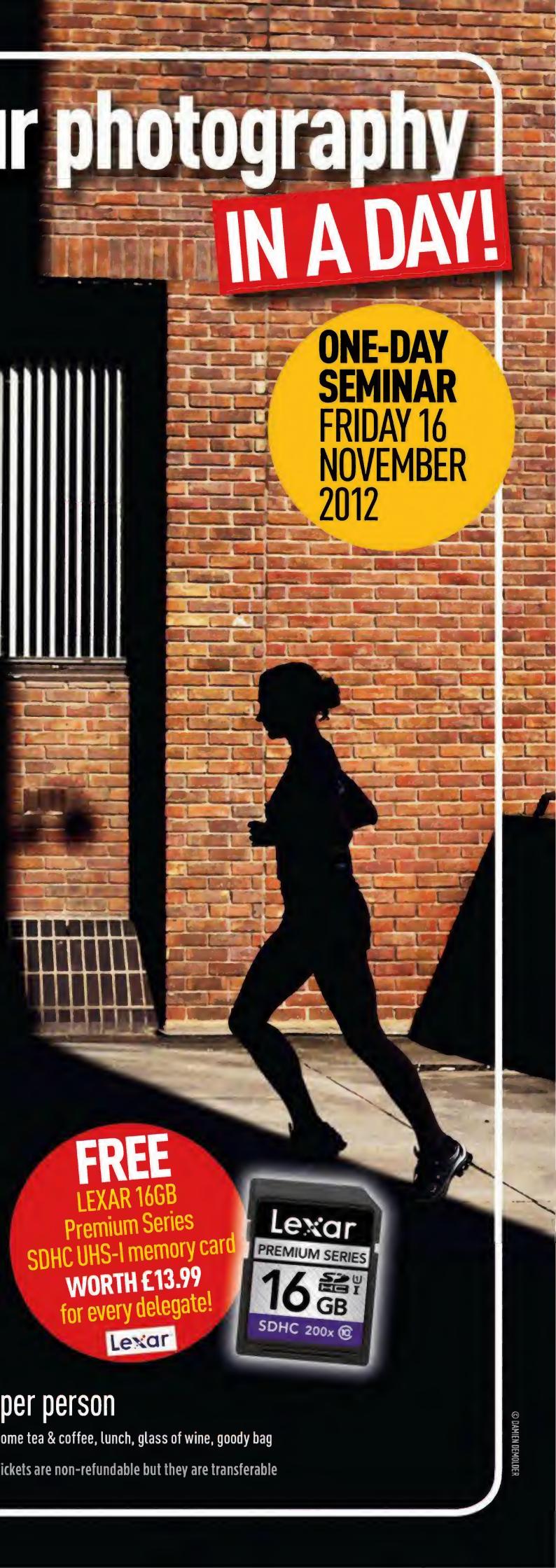
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AP Testbench

Over the next few pages we present this week's **equipment tests**, **reader questions** and **technique pointers**

SRB Griturn ND Fader From £29.95

www.srb-griturn.com

THIS variable ND filter is, in effect, numerous ND filters in one. Rotating the outer of two polarisers varies how much light enters the lens – in this case the filter has a light-reduction range of ND 0.6 (2EV) to ND 2.4 (8EV). The laws of physics dictate the 8EV setting isn't possible at wider focal lengths, as a black X appears in the frame. With an 18-200mm lens (27-300mm effective) at its widest setting the maximum setting is only 5EV.

I took images at each reduction setting at key focal lengths in the range of the aforementioned lens. Comparing the images with those taken without the filter reveals a slight yellow hue when the filter is in place, so it is worth taking a custom white balance reading with the filter attached rather than using AWB.

Also, at around 135mm (200mm effective) and above, there is a loss of sharpness. Overall, the filter doesn't quite match the quality of the Tiffen version, but it is the most cost-effective of its kind. SRB stock nine sizes, between 46-77mm. There is no extra lens cap.

Tim Coleman



Amateur Photographer
An excellent-value variable ND filter with respectable performance



The AP guarantee to you

All our tests are conducted by people who understand the product area, as well as photography. We aim to discover any shortcomings, as well as finding those aspects that deserve praise. All our tests are thorough, honest and independent



FXhome PhotoKey 5

£109 (Mac and PC)
£225 (Pro version)

www.fxhome.com

FXHOME has made green-screen software aimed at consumers and professionals for nine years. Using its PhotoKey software, a subject set against a green background can instantly be isolated onto a transparent background, and placed onto another image. The parameters of the effect can then be adjusted for realistic results.

In this latest version, the key improvements are a new Chroma Key filter for better green-screen removal, more realistic end results using 'spill compression', and faster processing. The interface includes several video tutorials, making PhotoKey a good starting place for beginners and for those wanting to master more complex techniques such as shadow casting, which is available on the Pro version only. Other benefits to the Pro version include twice the number of free backgrounds and effects, as well as batch processing. For full-body shots, shadow casting is pretty much essential for realistic results.

Tim Coleman

Amateur Photographer
A great starting point for those interested in green-screen technology



FORTHCOMING TESTS

In the next few weeks AP hopes to run the following equipment through the most rigorous testing procedures in the industry...

Nikon D600 vs D800

AP takes a look at both the Nikon D600 and D800 full-frame DSLRs to find out the advantages of each model.

AP 3 November

Olympus Pen E-PM2

We test the 16.1-million-pixel Olympus Pen E-PM2 and new 15mm f/8 body cap lens.

AP 3 November

Canon PowerShot G15

We test Canon's latest PowerShot model, with 12.1 million pixels, DIGIC 5 processor, 28-140mm (35mm equivalent) 5x zoom and full HD video.

AP 10 November

Nikon Coolpix S800c

The firm's latest 16-million-pixel compact camera comes equipped with the Android operating system.

AP 10 November

High-end, fast-aperture compact cameras

We compare image quality from six of the best high-end, fast-aperture compact cameras.

AP 17 November

FREE Photography Talks and Masterclasses!

Westfield London Travel Event 26-28 October 2012

Join **Amateur Photographer** and **What Digital Camera** for special photography activities at Westfield London, as part of the Westfield Travel Event taking place on 26-28 October.

Amateur Photographer will be running **Photography Masterclasses*** and talks with AP Editor **Damien Demolder**, who will be demonstrating 'seeing the shot'

and 'top tips for travel photography'.

The What Digital Camera editorial team will also be on hand in the **What Digital Camera Travel Clinic**, answering your queries and giving you 'advice prescriptions' – whether it be the best camera to take away with you or the best lens to achieve the ultimate shot.

The Travel Event is themed across the

three **Sun, Snow and City** zones, and will provide you with the chance to find out more information about a whole range of inspiring destinations to visit and photograph as you consider your next trip abroad or within the UK.

It's the perfect event for all the family – and there's the chance to **win some great holidays!**

1 Masterclasses with Amateur Photographer's Damien Demolder

Friday & Saturday 9am-11am
Sunday 11am-1pm

*Sessions are free of charge, and are pre-bookable – visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/Westfield for full details

2 Expert Sessions Drop-in Clinic – City Zone

Friday & Saturday 12pm & 4pm
Sunday 2pm & 4pm

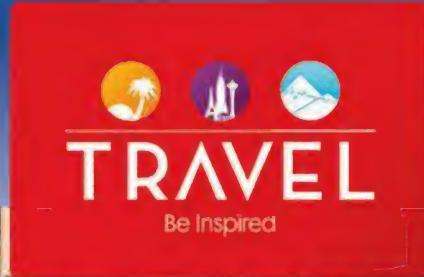
What Digital Camera's editorial team will be on hand to help you with all your camera and kit dilemmas before you go on holiday

3 Expert Sessions Drop-in Talks – Sun Zone

Friday & Saturday 1.30pm & 4pm
Sunday 3pm & 4pm

How to work with the sunlight to take a great holiday photograph. Our experts will talk through images on a screen to look at ways of using different lenses in the sun, how to take great panoramic shots, action shots of kids playing on the beach and lots more

COME AND JOIN US!



How to...

Use shallow depth of field

Opening an aperture to its widest extent achieves more than just fast shutter speeds. **Richard Sibley** explains some creative uses for a very shallow depth of field

THERE are a number of photographic styles for which maximising the depth of field is a priority. For instance, most landscape photographers will try to get as much of the scene in focus as possible, using techniques such as hyperfocal focusing, while macro photographers will use small apertures or focus stacking to ensure they get all of the subject in focus. While the technical side of this is a real skill, using a shallow depth of field can be just as creative.

Shallow depth of field is a technique used

Older manual-focus lenses are an affordable way to get a lens with a large aperture. This Nikkor 50mm f/1.4 lens was a bargain at just £80

for many purposes, but most commonly to draw the viewer's attention to a particular point of interest by obscuring the rest of the scene. As it is difficult to achieve a shallow depth of field when shooting a general scene with a compact camera, there is a perception among the general public that images with shallow depth of field are the realm of the professional.

This belief has been boosted by the introduction of video capture on DSLRs. Prior to this, a shallow depth of field was difficult to achieve with conventional consumer video cameras because of their small sensors. But now, even an entry-level DSLR can be used to create this effect, which is reminiscent of the movies, and manufacturers are keen to promote this cinematic aesthetic.

SUITABLE LENSES

The larger the maximum aperture, the better a lens will be for achieving shallow depth of field in its images. Generally, a standard focal length lens with a maximum aperture larger than f/2.8 is necessary, with a f/1.8 or even a f/1.4 lens preferable. While this may sound expensive, there are affordable options out there. Both Nikon and Canon have 50mm f/1.8 lenses in their ranges for under £200, and it is possible to find used versions of these lenses for under £100.

Don't forget that many standard kit lenses

supplied with film SLRs used to be 50mm f/1.8 models, so there is an abundance of these optics available second-hand; for owners of Nikon or Pentax DSLRs, these lenses should fit straight onto the camera. For other DSLR makes or compact system cameras, an adapter may be required, but even with the cost of this included, it should be possible to buy an old manual-focus 50mm f/1.8 lens for less than £50.

SHOOTING WIDE OPEN

Except for in low-light conditions, most photographers avoid shooting with a fully open aperture. This is because a lens will not be at its sharpest at this setting and will tend to produce lower-contrast images. Vignetting and chromatic aberration will also be at their most intrusive.

However, shooting wide open is necessary if the photographer wants to obtain the shallowest depth of field possible. On these occasions, most of the problems can be lived with. For instance, while sharpness will vary from lens to lens, fixed optics will generally still be of an acceptable sharpness even when fully open; contrast can be adjusted in image-editing software, while vignetting is quite easily removed, or it can even be beneficial by concentrating the attention on the centre of an image.

However, chromatic aberration will always be of some concern, especially with cheaper

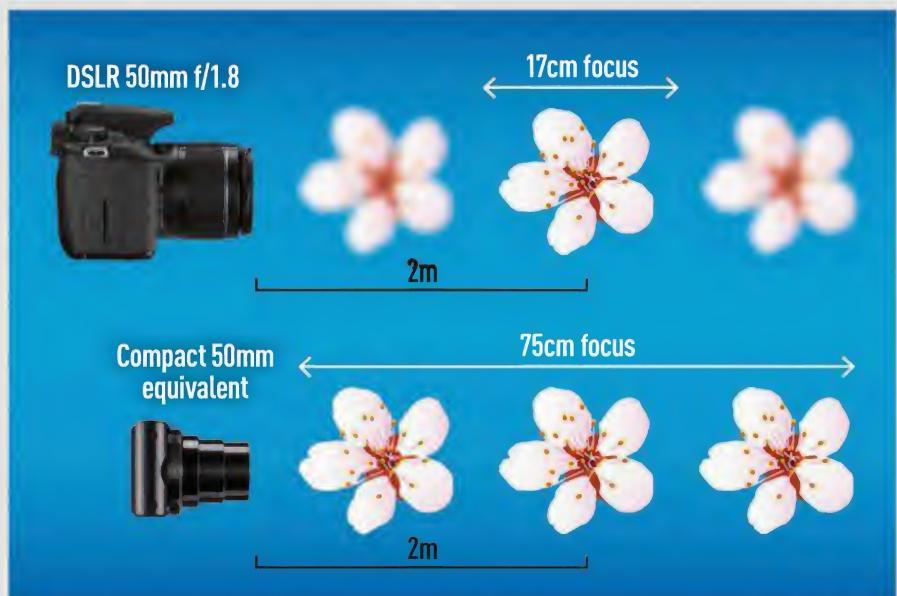


ACHIEVING SHALLOW DEPTH OF FIELD

AS WE all know, a wide aperture is required – the larger the aperture, the shallower the depth of field. However, this isn't the only consideration; the relationship between the focal length of the lens and the focus distance to the subject is just as important. For example, a DSLR with a full-frame sensor, 50mm lens and aperture of f/1.8 will create a depth of field of just 17cm when photographing a subject 2m away.

A compact camera with a 1/1.63in sensor, with its lens set to the equivalent of 50mm and f/1.8 might be expected to provide the same depth of field. However, this is not the case, even if the angle of view remains the same as with the full-frame camera. This is because depth of field is dictated by the *actual* focal length of the lens. So, using our compact camera with its 1/1.63in sensor and 10.8mm focal length (equivalent of 50mm on a full-frame camera), the f/1.8 aperture actually gives a depth of field of 75cm. This is why it is more difficult to achieve a shallow depth of field with a compact camera.

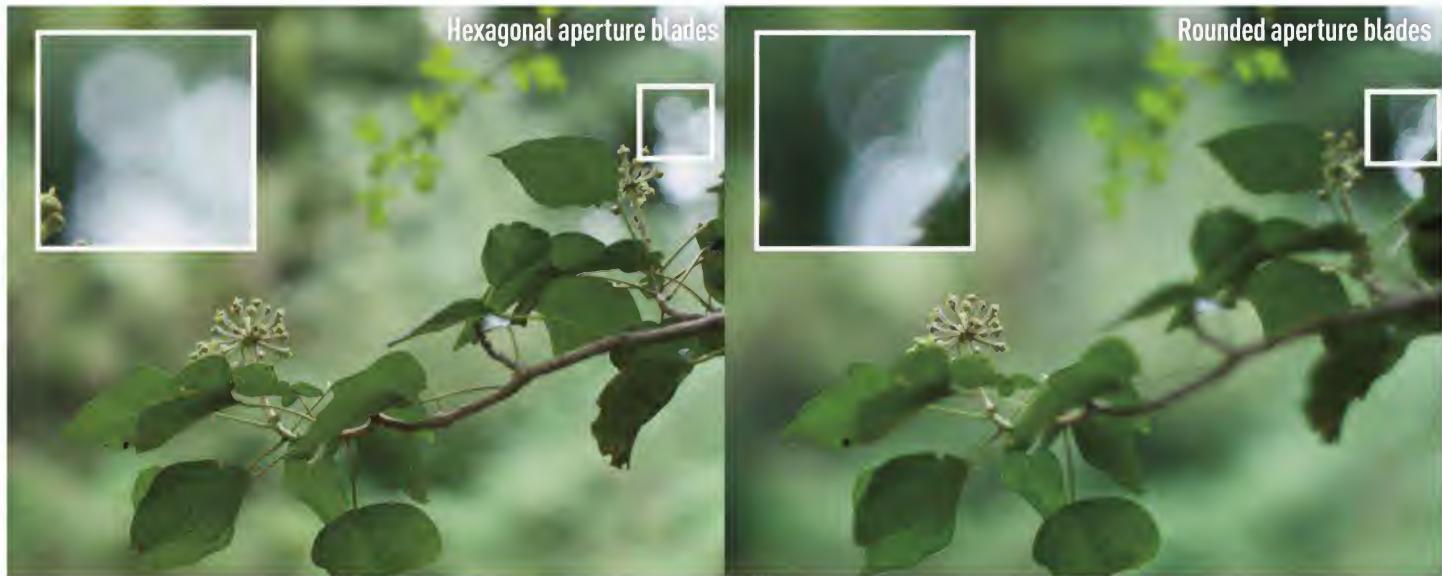
So rather than thinking about equivalent focal lengths, it is the *actual* focal length of the lens that is important. This advice also applies when using the APS-C or four thirds formats. Conversely, cameras with medium-format sensors, such as the Pentax 645D make it possible to create an even shallower depth of field. In the same scenario as above, with an 85mm lens (equivalent of a 50mm on a full-



frame camera), the depth of field at f/1.8 is just 9cm. Even at a more realistic f/2.8, depth of field is still just shallower than the 35mm full-frame camera, at just 15cm.

The closer the point of focus, the shallower the depth of field will be. However, the depth of field of a 300mm lens at f/2.8 focusing at 10m is the

same as a 30mm f/2.8 lens focusing at 1m. Both produce a depth of field of 18cm. While the angle of view might change, if the subject is the same size in the frame then the depth of field is also the same. Lens choice is therefore a consideration when shooting images with a shallow depth of field.



BOKEH AND SPECULAR HIGHLIGHTS

FOR THOSE unfamiliar with the term, 'bokeh' describes the out-of-focus area of an image. The look is characterised by the shape of the aperture blades of a lens. Thus, a hexagonal aperture will produce hexagonal bokeh. This can be seen in out-of-focus specular highlights, which take on the shape of the blades. Ideally, a smooth bokeh is preferable, and it is rounded aperture blades that create this.

One advantage of shooting with the aperture fully open is that the bokeh will always be

circular, due to the blades not obstructing the light coming through the circular lens barrel. As a result, images usually have very smoothly graduated, natural-looking bokeh.

One of the best times to see specular highlights is when shooting cityscapes at night. The combination of the shallow depth of field and these highlights lend images a very cinematic look. Out-of-focus lights become highlights devoid of detail, and they can even start to blur into one another to

create interesting patterns and shapes.

Immediately following rain is another occasion when you can use shallow depth of field to achieve that filmic effect. Wet surfaces are highly reflective so shoot your subject against a background that contains lots of light sources, such as streetlamps, illuminated signs, traffic lights and so on, to create even more highlights. You can also use a bit of fill-in flash to increase the separation between the subject and background.

lenses. The effects of this type of distortion will be at their worst along high-contrast edges, towards the corners of an image, so try and make sure your subject is close to the centre. Of course, this isn't always possible, so when shooting wide open, save images as raw files so that chromatic aberration can be removed later using software. Alternatively, convert the image to black & white, where the aberrations may not be as noticeable.

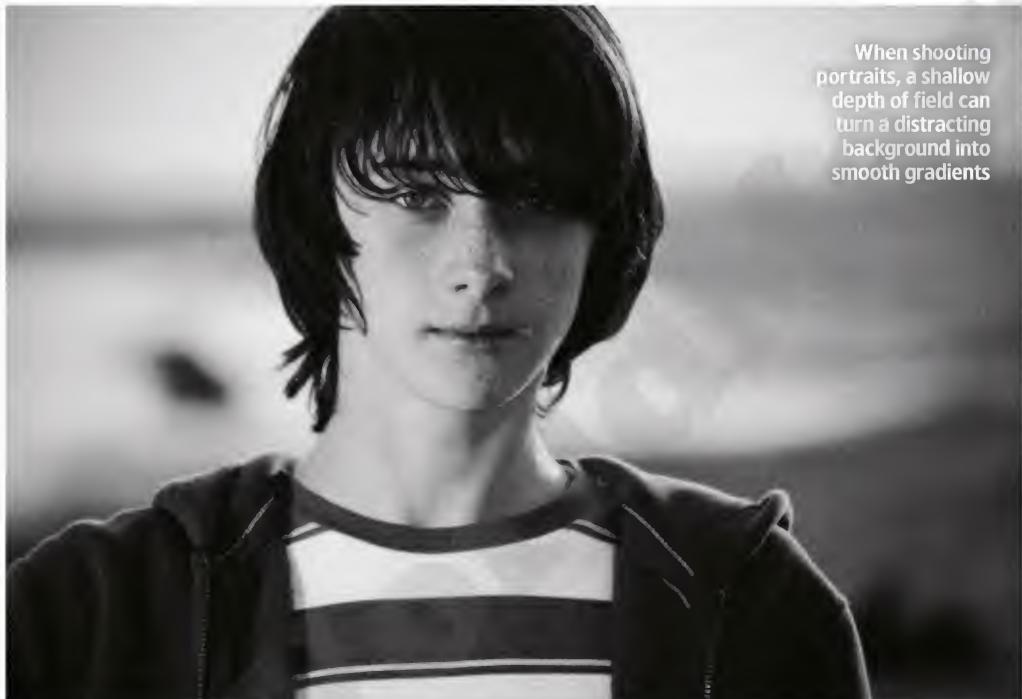
Another option is to stop down the lens. If you have a lens with a f/1.8 aperture, stopping down to f/2.8 may reduce chromatic aberration, while still producing a shallow depth of field.

SHALLOW PORTRAITS

One way in which the softness of a wide-open lens can be used positively is for portraits. The shallow depth of field means that when focus is on the subject's eyes, very often other facial features will be slightly soft. Combined with the fact that a lens is naturally softer when at its maximum aperture, it is easy to achieve a slight soft-focus effect.

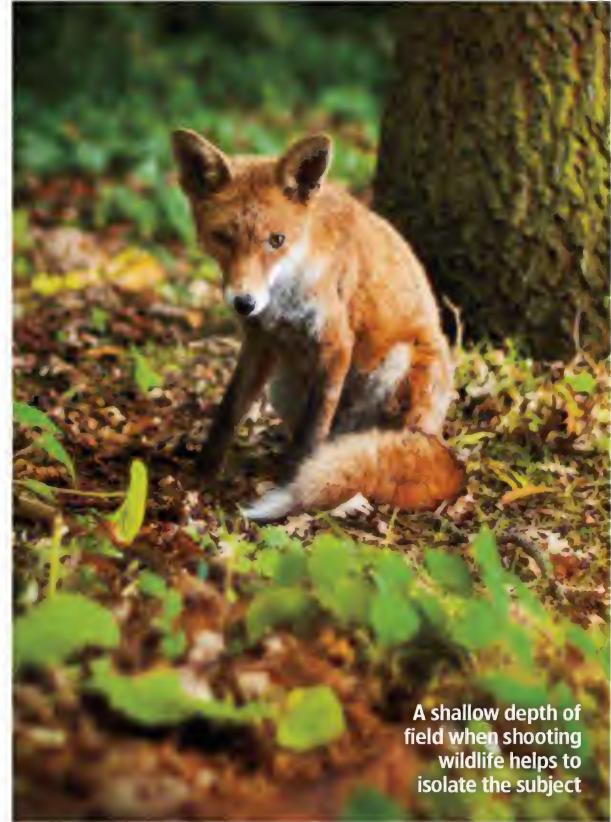
This is a particularly flattering effect when taking female portraits, as it slightly softens and smooths the skin. But beware, shooting portraits in this way can be tricky, because with a shallow

'There is a perception among the general public that shallow depth of field is the realm of the professional'



When shooting portraits, a shallow depth of field can turn a distracting background into smooth gradients

How to Use shallow depth of field



A shallow depth of field when shooting wildlife helps to isolate the subject

'Shallow depth of field can be useful when shooting a group of items, such as a face among a crowd, or a flower against foliage'

Even the slight change between f/2 and f/4 can make quite a big difference to the depth of field

Use a shallow depth of field to pick a specific subject among a crowd

TOP TIPS

1 On bright, sunny days use an ND filter to reduce the exposure and allow you to shoot wide open, without overexposing the image.

2 Use continuous shooting and continuous AF to fire a burst of images to ensure that one is in focus.

3 Remember that out-of-focus areas can act as a frame for the subject.

4 Don't be scared of adding to the natural vignette of shooting wide open. It can help focus attention away from the edges.

5 It is possible to pick up older manual-focus 35mm or 50mm f/1.8 or f/2.8 lenses at very affordable prices.



depth of field any movement either by the photographer or the subject, however minute, can cause a shift in focus from the subject's eye to their nose or ears. Sometimes even the slightest movement can cause a noticeable shift from the pupils of the eye to the eyelashes.

If you are taking portrait images using an autofocus camera, switch to continuous shooting and continuous AF mode, and use focus tracking or keep a focus point on the subject's eye. Rather than taking a single shot, fire a burst of three images and then choose the sharpest. If using a manual-focus lens, try just shifting the focus barrel slightly as you hold down the shutter button.

ISOLATE A SUBJECT

The main purpose of using a shallow depth of field is to isolate the subject from its surroundings. It is a very simple technique for directing the eye straight to the subject of the image. This can be useful when shooting a group of items, such as a face among a crowd, or a flower

against a busy background of foliage.

It can also be a good way of framing a subject. By using a wideangle lens and getting down low in a scene, both the foreground and background will be very blurred and out of focus, leaving the main subject sharp and completely framed by out-of-focus areas. Which, once again, makes the subject very obvious to the viewer. AP



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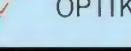
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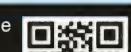
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The wide 22mm setting is class-leading. At the 580mm setting, composition is tricky, but shooting at 1/400sec I achieved sharp results

Pentax X-5

Pentax introduces the X-5 bridge camera to its range, featuring a wide 22-580mm lens that benefits from the company's sensor-shift shake reduction

Tim Coleman
Technical writer

ALMOST three years ago when Pentax's last bridge camera, the X90, was released, it featured a class-leading 26x optical zoom. Fast forward to 2012 and we have seen a 50x zoom in the Canon PowerShot SX50 HS, a constant f/2.8 aperture in the 24x optical zoom of the Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ200, and an imaging sensor in the Fujifilm X-S1 that is about twice the size of those used in other models. Manufacturers are including many new features in their cameras in order to get them noticed. Therefore, the new Pentax X-5, which replaces the X90, has much to build on in order to get up to speed in this competitive part of the market.

FEATURES

The main feature of a bridge camera will always be its lens, and here the Pentax X-5 offers a 26x zoom. It is certainly not

class-leading, as nowadays some travel-zoom compacts come close, but the range still makes the X-5 hugely versatile. In fact, the X-5 has an 'ultra-wide' 22.3mm setting, matched only by the recently announced Olympus SP-820UZ, while at its 580mm telephoto setting the X-5's maximum aperture is reduced from f/3.1 to f/5.9.

For these telephoto settings to be used effectively, the camera needs to be stabilised. In the X-5, Pentax has the advantage of its unique sensor-shift shake-reduction system, which also features in the company's DSLRs. Pentax has introduced a digital shake reduction (SR) mode that works with the sensor-shift SR to produce a dual shake-reduction system.

Images are recorded onto a back-illuminated CMOS sensor. This type of sensor supposedly reduces the level and effect of noise on image quality, which is important in a bridge camera like the X-5 because it uses a compact-sized 1/2.33in (6.08x4.56mm) unit that is prone to noise. The sensor contains 16 million effective pixels for a maximum output of 4608 x 3456 pixels and a file size of 4-5MB.

The X-5 offers 1080p HD video

AT A GLANCE

- 16-million-pixel back illuminated CMOS sensor
- 26x zoom (22-580mm equivalent)
- 3in, 460,000-dot tilt LCD screen
- Full HD 1080p, 30fps video recording
- 10fps burst mode
- Street price around £200

recording at 30fps. Videos up to 25min can be captured via the direct record button on the rear of the camera. There are also a number of shooting modes to choose from, including a high-speed continuous 30-frame burst at 10fps, 12 digital filters and creative image-processing tools.

BUILD AND HANDLING

First impressions of the Pentax X-5 are very positive. The camera's pronounced handgrip has a faux leather finish, and is grooved while its deep profile affords a firm grip. So, not only is the camera comfortable to hold, but it is also well balanced and light enough to shoot with one hand or carry around all day on a shoulder.

Start-up is fast, with the X-5 ready to shoot in 2secs. The lens zoom is controlled by the rocker next to the shutter-release button, and its wide 26x optical zoom range takes about 2secs to go from the wide to the telephoto setting. Use the digital zoom and the range is extended to 187.2x, but the quality of the images in these settings is noticeably compromised. The digital zoom extension can be deactivated to prevent accidentally choosing one of these settings.

At the 580mm setting it is much more difficult to keep the X-5 steady when shooting handheld, and the maximum aperture is reduced to f/5.9. Dual SR then compensates for camera shake, and while I found that with a steady hand I was able to shoot at 1/125sec and often get a sharp image, it is better to shoot at around 1/400sec or faster.

Thankfully, a tilt function has been introduced to the LCD screen in the X-5, which aids clear viewing from both high and low viewing angles. Without the tilt function in use, the moderately bright 3in, 460,000-dot screen can be tricky to view. Images can also be composed and viewed using the built-in EVF. I suspect photographers will use the LCD screen more frequently, because the 230,000-dot display of the EVF lacks the vibrancy and crispness to



'Pentax has made radical improvements across the board in producing the X-5'

display the final image accurately.

Pentax has opted to use four AA batteries to power the camera, so it is worth buying rechargeable batteries to save money on new batteries every time they run out.

Aperture and shutter priority shooting modes are not available, possibly because the camera features only two available apertures at any given focal length. For those who want control over the exposure, manual exposure is possible, and can be adjusted using the rear dial and the exposure compensation button on the top-plate.

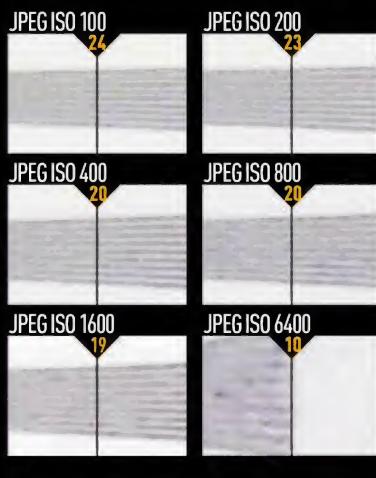
PERFORMANCE

Compromises have to be made with a camera that has a compact-sized imaging sensor offering such a wide zoom range in a single lens. The quality of detail that is captured is perhaps the most significant downside to a bridge camera, as is the case with the X-5. Given the target audience, processing power and price point of the camera, it shoots JPEG format only. In a landscape, fine detail such as grass appears either mushy or as a single green mass. There is also a softness to the edge detail



RESOLUTION, NOISE & DYNAMIC RANGE

These images show 72ppi (100% on a computer screen) sections of images of a resolution chart, captured with the lens set to its 100mm point. We show the section of the resolution chart where the camera starts to fail to reproduce the lines separately. The higher the number visible in these images, the better the camera's detail resolution is at the specified sensitivity setting.



Facts & figures

RRP	£229.99
Sensor	1/2.3in (6.08 x 4.56mm), 16-million-pixel CMOS
Output size	4608 x 3456 pixels
Lens	26x zoom lens, 4-104mm (22.3-580mm effective) f/3.1-5.9, 1cm close focus macro mode
File format	JPEG only
Sensitivity	ISO 100-6400
Shutter speeds	4-1/2000sec
Metering system	Multi-segment, centreweighted, spot
White balance	Auto WB, 6 presets, manual
Exposure modes	Programme, manual, auto, custom, sport, landscape, portrait, handheld night snap and 20 scene modes including HDR
AF modes	9-point, spot, tracking, infinity landscape, manual, AF point switching
Viewfinder	Yes, 230,000-dot EVF
LCD monitor	3in tilt LCD with 460,000 dots
Storage media	SDHC, SDXC, SD
Power	4x AA batteries (approx 500 shots)
Weight	599g (including card and battery)
Dimensions	86.5 x 120 x 106.5mm

of subjects in all but close-range subjects in bright light.

Our resolution charts indicate that the X-5 is capable of resolving to the 24 marker at ISO 100, which is on a par with the best performing bridge cameras. There is a drop in overall image quality at ISO 400, and then again at ISO 1600 and each ISO rating after that. Detail is soft at best, but this is even more noticeable down the ISO range.

As with most cameras at this level, the evaluative metering of the X-5 produces print-ready images. Midtones are bright and punchy, but in scenes of high contrast the highlight detail is usually lost. This suggests the camera has a modest dynamic range. In bright conditions, it is best to use manual exposure with around 0.7EV reduction dialled in, which is indicated on the screen.

Compact cameras tend to produce 'less-believable' colours than cameras with larger

The AWB setting produces a cool colour rendition in this scene, which was shot on a bright day with light cloud cover. The detail in the sky has burned out quickly, and the edge detail of the building and branches against the sky suffers from chromatic aberrations

imaging sensors. This is the case with the X-5, especially when using the landscape scene mode, where colours are overly saturated. Overall, the auto white balance is a little cool for my liking, but a custom white balance addresses this.

For everyday use, the autofocus of the X-5 is perfectly capable, without being outstanding. The standard focus mode uses 25 centrally placed AF points, which are individually selectable in spot AF. Manual-focus operation is intuitive and covers from infinity to 1cm macro.

Verdict

THERE is no doubt that Pentax has made radical improvements across the board to the X90 in producing the X-5. Those who tend to shoot landscapes should appreciate the camera's class-leading wideangle focal length, and the camera feels good in the hand, too. At its affordable price point, this is a very competitive camera. However, in a market where manufacturers have included so many new features to make them stand out from the crowd, the X-5 sinks into the background.

**Amateur
Photographer**
★★★★★

Ask AP

Let the AP team answer your photographic queries

BACK-FOCUS PROBLEMS

Q I know one or two people who have experienced a back-focus problem, but I think this is something that is often overlooked or maybe even denied by manufacturers. I believe that Sigma will take in a camera/lens combination and recalibrate the equipment, but I haven't heard of other manufacturers offering this service. Is this a major problem?

Robin Bailey

A I'll cover the 'what and why' of back focusing in this week's glossary, and while it's definitely something that's overlooked by most of us, I don't think it's fair to say that it is something that is 'denied' by manufacturers. In fact, you could argue that the opposite is true, as a number of digital cameras (mostly pro-spec DSLR bodies) have included a 'Micro AF adjust' feature for a number of years. This enables you to fine-tune the camera's AF system for your individual lenses, essentially compensating for any slight back (or front) focus issues to achieve the optimum result from your optics.

In our 4 June 2011 issue, we featured a free focus-adjustment chart, enabling you to check whether your focus is off along with instructions on how to use the chart. If you missed this issue, visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/backissues where you can find details about how to obtain a copy. Alternatively, Datacolor's Spyder LensCal tool provides a more hard-wearing version for around £50. Visit



spyder.datacolor.com/products for details.

If your camera doesn't allow you to adjust the focus yourself, the only option is to get in touch with your camera/lens manufacturer to see if they can resolve the problem. In many cases, though, it will be an issue that is so slight as to be negligible, and if you haven't noticed it then it really isn't worth worrying about. **Chris Gatcum**

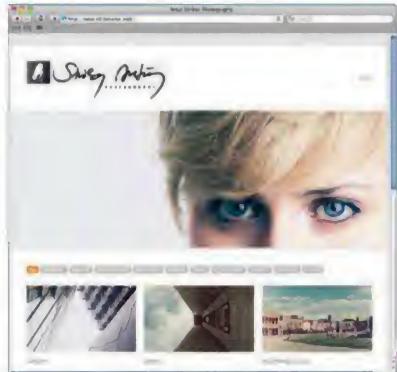
EXPLORING IR

Q I have recently bought a second-hand Nikon D70S body and R72 filter so I can explore the world of infrared photography. Can you advise me about the settings I need to consider to get the best results, such as the sharpest image and the least 'grain'?

Mike Wilde

A If you've got the camera and you've got the filter, then why not give it a go and see for yourself? Generally, the process is the same as shooting 'conventional' images: a low ISO will minimise noise, while setting the aperture a couple of stops from its smallest setting (which usually means setting it to f/8-f/11) will maximise sharpness. **Chris Gatcum**

If you want to make a name for yourself as a photographer then a website is a great way to publicise your work



ASK...

Be it about modern technology, vintage equipment, photographic science or help with technique, here at AP we have the team that can help you. Simply email your questions to: apanswers@ipcmedia.com, via [twitter @ap_answers](http://twitter.com/ap_answers) or by post to: **Ask AP, Amateur Photographer Magazine, IPC Media, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU.**

PHOTOGRAPHY AS A CAREER

Q I am an amateur/semi-professional photographer, who recently moved to England from Hungary in the hope that I can expand my creativity and gain more exposure for my work so that one day I can make a living from my talent and passion. I felt that the UK is a land of chances, and hopefully the place where I can build my photographic future.

Sadly, after two months of applying for several positions, I have yet to accomplish any of my goals. Can you advise me as to how I could get started as a photographer?

Artur Striker

A Regardless of the genre, photography is a highly competitive area, and there are thousands of would-be photographers leaving schools and colleges every year, as well as older 'career changers', all of whom want to make a living from their camera. Many will spend years trying to get their 'big break', and the reality is that for some it simply will not happen, no matter how much they invest in terms of time and effort, or indeed how talented they are.

I've had a look at your online portfolio (www.strikerartur.com) and there are some great images on there, so you shouldn't be disheartened as you've got the skills. However, if you really want to do it then you need patience and persistence. Hooking up with a photographer working in the area you aspire to and assisting them was

FROM THE AP FORUM

Stuck filter

fuzz_y asks I have a Nikon D3100 fitted with an 18-200mm lens, but the UV filter is stuck on the lens. It will not turn at all, and I don't want to try too hard in case I damage it! Does anyone have any tips as to how I can remove it?

wave replies I would get a rubber pad, then stand the filter and lens on it and twist.

AP GLOSSARY

BACK FOCUS

In this week's Ask AP, Robin Bailey enquires about back focus, which is a fairly common occurrence, yet it is not something that we necessarily consider. Put simply, it means that the camera (usually a DSLR) focuses slightly behind the subject (or in front of it in the case of front focus). How noticeable this is will depend on a number of things, but depth of field at smaller apertures can often hide it, meaning it's most apparent when you're shooting with your lens wide open.

At this point most people will assume their lens is slightly 'soft' when it's used at its maximum aperture and think nothing more of it. However, although a soft lens is a possibility (and it may indeed be nothing to do with the focus), it could also be a back (or front) focus issue.

The reason this happens is because of the way in which cameras and lenses are manufactured. Whether you're using entry-level kit or high-end gear, cameras and lenses are mass-produced, and this

brings with it 'manufacturing tolerances', which are the fractions of a millimetre either side of an ideal measurement that the manufacturer will accept.

By their very nature, these tolerances create imperfections. Tiny differences in the thickness of the lens mount, the position of the camera's mirror, the position of the AF sensors, the sensor position and many other elements in the focusing chain can all add up, but as long as they remain 'within tolerance' overall, the camera or lens will receive a seal of approval and head out of the factory.

Yet while both your camera and lens may be within tolerance when measured individually, there is nothing to say how close they are to the extremes of the manufacturer's tolerance range. Both may be at the upper end of the tolerance scale, and could easily exceed the tolerance levels when combined. It is this specific camera/lens combination that creates a back- or front-focus issue.

traditionally the first step towards 'going solo'. Unfortunately, it's going to mean knocking on a lot of doors (metaphorically speaking) and hoping somebody will take you on – few jobs are advertised as very few working pros will be short of offers from potential assistants.

Alternatively, you can take a more direct approach and simply try to get work for yourself. This is an increasingly popular option, as digital capture has in many ways shortened the learning process (at least in terms of the practical side of the business). If you want to shoot fashion, for example, then you need to contact magazines,

Fen replies If you have a good – and friendly – camera shop near you, they will remove it for free. Failing that, use a tea towel to grip the filter and then remove it.

Bob Maddison replies The problem arises because the filter ring is distorted when you grip it with your fingers. You need to apply uniform pressure around the whole of the filter diameter. Try using one of those devices designed to help you remove stubborn screw tops on jars. The type with a heavy rubber gripper is the one to use. There are also filter wrenches available from most camera shops that are not too expensive.

Rjbell replies Rub a candle over the thread the

designers, independent stores – in fact, anyone who uses (or could potentially use) a photographer. This applies to any other area of photography – you really need to let people know you're out there.

To my mind this means you've got two choices. If you want to be a photographer you need to get out there and tell people you're a photographer, whether that means contacting professionals with a view to assisting them, trying to get clients of your own, or perhaps both. Don't expect things to happen immediately though. The second option, to put it bluntly, is to choose a different career path. **Chris Gatcum**

next time you use it to stop it sticking again.

Benchista replies A candle will work, but a soft pencil is probably better.

Roger Mac replies Try using a hot tea towel to grip the filter. The heat might allow the filter to expand enough to loosen it slightly. Apart from that, all the above advice is excellent. Incidentally, you can buy dry lubricants (powdered graphite or molybdenum disulphide, for example) that are even better than candle wax or a soft pencil.

Rob Barnett replies A plastic filter wrench does the trick easily. Most camera shops should stock them and they cost only a few pounds.

In next week's AP

On sale Tuesday 30 October



ON TEST

NIKON D600 VS D800 TWIN TEST

Want to buy a **full-frame** DSLR? Then read our comparison of these 'budget' models from **Nikon**

CONTENT FOR NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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Samyang 24mm f/1.4 ED AS UMC

Tim Coleman finds out if the optical quality of the manual-focus Samyang 24mm f/1.4 lens can match comparable own-brand versions costing three times more

Tim Coleman
Technical writer

SAMYANG has long been a minor player in the UK lens market, but with supply improving, new releases extending the company's range and each model available in most of the popular lens mounts, Samyang may just find itself emerging from the shadows. When we tested the company's 35mm f/1.4 AS UMC lens (see AP 27 August 2011), it received a five-star rating. Since then, the company has

announced several new models, including cine-based optics and more fixed-focal-length wideangle lenses, including the 24mm f/1.4 ED AS UMC lens on test here.

What appealed to us about Samyang's 35mm f/1.4 was its high build quality, good handling and excellent optical performance, and at a first glance we have no reason to expect anything different from the new 24mm f/1.4 lens. Another important factor with the new lens is its price, as the Samyang 24mm f/1.4 is available for around one-third the cost of own-brand lenses. With the Nikon and Canon own-brand equivalent versions having a street price of around £1,500, the £500 Samyang 24mm f/1.4 lens is a bit of a steal.

DATA FILE

RRP

Varies according to fit, see below

Street Price

£480 for all fits except £500 for Canon and £520 for Nikon fit (prices taken from www.ukdigital.co.uk)

Focal length

24mm

Mount

Canon EF, Nikon F, Pentax KAF, Sony Alpha, Samsung NX, four thirds

Construction

13 elements in 12 groups including 4 low-dispersion elements

Diaphragm blades

8

Aperture range

f/1.4-f/22

Minimum focus distance

0.25m

Filter size

77mm

Size

97x83mm

Weight

680g

There is a key difference between the Samyang and own-brand models in that the Samyang 24mm f/1.4 is manual-focus only. However, for those who can do without autofocus, a Samyang lens is worth serious consideration. The new lens is a particularly appealing model in the range because this focal length is used mainly for landscapes, for which autofocus can be less important. Throughout this test, we have used both the Canon and Nikon-mount versions of the lens.

DIFFERENT VERSIONS

In the Samyang range, the Nikon version of each lens is the only one to feature electronic contacts to relay exposure information. On the Nikon version, the shutter speed and aperture can be controlled via exposure modes, and it is undeniably easier to use than the other versions. In use, the aperture ring must be set to the f/22 marker.

For all other versions of the Samyang lens, the aperture is adjusted using the aperture ring on the lens itself, so only aperture priority or manual exposure is available. As a result, the brightness of the viewfinder is affected depending on the aperture selected. For example, if you choose a more closed aperture, the viewfinder display is darker. Furthermore, the exposure information is not displayed in-camera during capture or in the metadata of image files. These handling issues do make all the Samyang lenses, apart from the Nikon versions, trickier and less convenient to use. However, many of the Sony single-lens translucent cameras can indicate the focus point through a 'peaking' function, which helps to ensure the correct area is in focus.

BUILD AND HANDLING

The 24mm f/1.4 ED AS UMC is a full-frame lens that many people would use primarily for landscapes. When used with an APS-C camera, the focal length of the lens is approximately 35mm and the maximum aperture around f/2, which also makes it a good choice



The inner area marks out the frame coverage when using the APS-C format, while the entire image is what has been recorded at the full-frame format

for reportage and environmental portraits. I used the lens with the Nikon D600, which features both the APS-C and full-frame format, and it is easy to switch between the two to achieve the 24mm and 36mm focal lengths.

There are a number of similarities between the Samyang 24mm and 35mm lenses. In fact, to the naked eye they look like the same lens, except that each focal length is indicated on the barrel and the 35mm version is physically longer. The build quality of the new lens is very high and

reassuringly weighty. It is also a similar size to own-brand versions, although it is a little lighter thanks no doubt to the lack of parts required for autofocus.

With no autofocus, the Samyang 24mm f/1.4 relies on intuitive control of manual focusing for ease to use. Thankfully, the lens barrel is dominated by the ridged focus ring, which is dampened beautifully for a smooth rotation. Focus distances are clearly marked around the middle of the lens barrel, and with these reference points it is possible to ready the lens near the focus point as you

This scene was captured with the Samyang 24mm lens and the equivalent Canon 24mm lens, with exposure settings of f/11, 1/125sec and ISO 800

bring the camera to the eye and then make any minor adjustments.

A very shallow depth of field is possible with the maximum apertures available, but even at f/4 close-range subjects taken using the full-frame format have a narrow margin for error, and it is undeniably tricky to achieve an accurate focus. Time is required over images in order to get the focusing right. For most scenes, bracketing the focus is helpful to increase the likelihood of an accurate focus. The minimum focus distance is 0.25m, and like many wideangle lenses the Samyang's thread takes 77mm filters.

There is no marker on the lens barrel to line up the lens when attaching it to the lens mount, which is disappointing. The f/22 marker on the rear of the barrel is in the correct place on the Nikon version, so this needs to be remembered when mounting the lens, while a red dot on the rear metal lens mount is used on the Canon version.

OPTICAL QUALITY

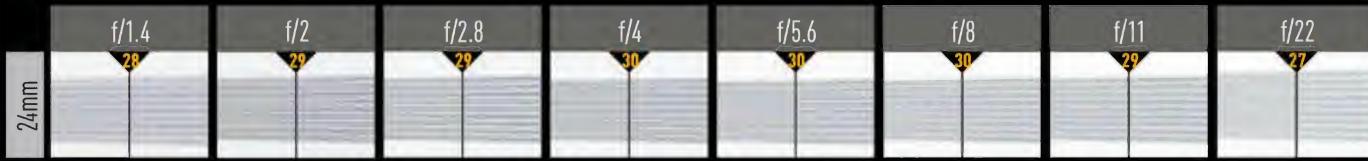
For this test I have taken a comprehensive range of images, covering the range of apertures and focus distances with both full-frame and APS-C format.

Centre sharpness is excellent with the Samyang 24mm f/1.4, especially when using apertures between f/4 and f/11. There is a minor drop off in resolved detail at the maximum and minimum aperture settings, which is standard for any lens. Impressively,



RESOLUTION

The images below show a small section of our resolution chart. All the images in this test were taken with the Samyang 24mm f/1.4 ED AS UMC lens and a Nikon D600, which has a full-frame, 24.3-million-pixel sensor.



SAMYANG, Unit 8 Deanfield Court, Link 59 Business Park, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 1QS. Email: info@samyang.co.uk. Website: www.samyang.co.uk

though, detail is crisp, even in the corners, which is testament to the edge-to-edge quality of the glass.

I would avoid using the f/1.4 aperture. In this setting, it is difficult to achieve any sort of sharpness in the frame, with a soft glow around all areas, including the area in focus. Vignetting is pronounced, and chromatic aberrations (red and green 'fringing') are a little distracting across the entire frame. Drop down to f/2 and vignetting is significantly reduced and it is all but gone at f/2.8. Likewise, at f/2.8 fringing is reduced in the centre of the frame, although it is still present in particular situations such as backlit tree branches against a bright sky. In fact, without using chromatic aberration correction post-capture, fringing can be an issue all the way to f/8.

As expected from a wideangle lens, barrel distortion is obvious under the controlled studio setting and for scenes that include structures such as buildings. The lens is also not particularly flattering for portraits, but this focal length is not really designed

for such use. In a landscape image, barrel distortion is not distracting.

The quality of the out-of-focus areas is, on the whole, pleasant, although in very specific situations, such as backlit gaps between the leaves in a tree, the bokeh can be a little poor up to f/2.8, with an orb effect. However, this is a very specific situation that is unlikely to crop up often in everyday shooting. Landscape photographers who use a 'extensive' depth of field are unlikely to ever see this effect because it is not present at apertures of f/4 and above.

SAMYANG VS CANON

With a street price one-third that of a Nikon and Canon version, I was keen to compare the optical quality of the Samyang 24mm f/1.4 lens with one of these own-brand models. Looking over identical landscape images taken with the Samyang lens and the Canon EF 24mm f/1.4L II USM at f/11 (with images processed using Canon's Digital Photo Professional raw software),



On the left is the Nikon version, which in use is set to its f/22 aperture and the settings adjusted in-camera, while the aperture ring of the Canon version on the right is used to change aperture

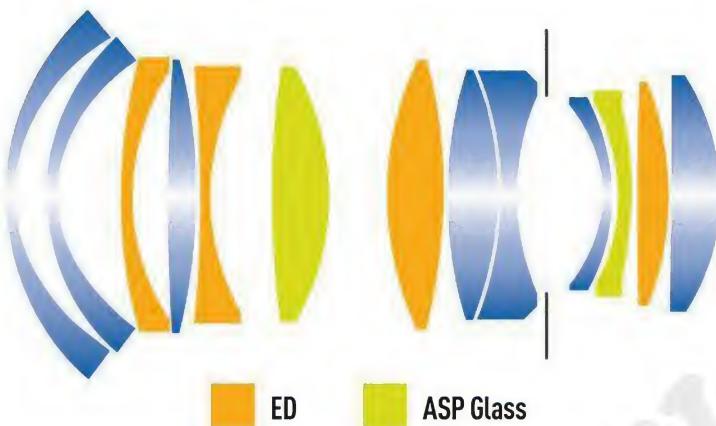
the Canon has a slight edge on image sharpness that is only noticeable under close scrutiny. What is more obvious is that the Canon lens is 'brighter', with images showing greater contrast and punch.

The lens distortions mentioned in the optical quality section of the review, such as fringing, are consistent in both lenses. Overall, optically there really is little to choose between the two lenses. Even on a wideangle lens, though, general-purpose use benefits enormously from autofocus, which is where the Canon model has its clear advantage. **AP**

LENS CONSTRUCTION

INSIDE the Samyang 24mm f/1.4 lens is a complex construction of 13 lens elements in 12 groups, four of which are low dispersion (ED) elements and two are Aspherical. The

aperture range runs from f/1.4 to f/22, and the eight diaphragm blades create a near circular aperture. A circular aperture is desirable to create high-quality out-of-focus areas (bokeh).



Verdict

WHEN using such the shallow depth of field that an f/1.4 lens offers, a manual-focus-only lens is a good reminder of just how useful autofocus is. Even a skilled photographer will find that there are numerous occasions when the manual focus is 'off' in everyday images. For the landscape photographer who has time to compose and view images, though, this is less of an issue, and exactly where the Samyang 24mm f/1.4 lens comes into its own. Considering the difference in price between this lens and own-brand versions, the optical quality of the Samyang 24mm f/1.4 is simply excellent. Through this lens, Samyang deserves its growing reputation.



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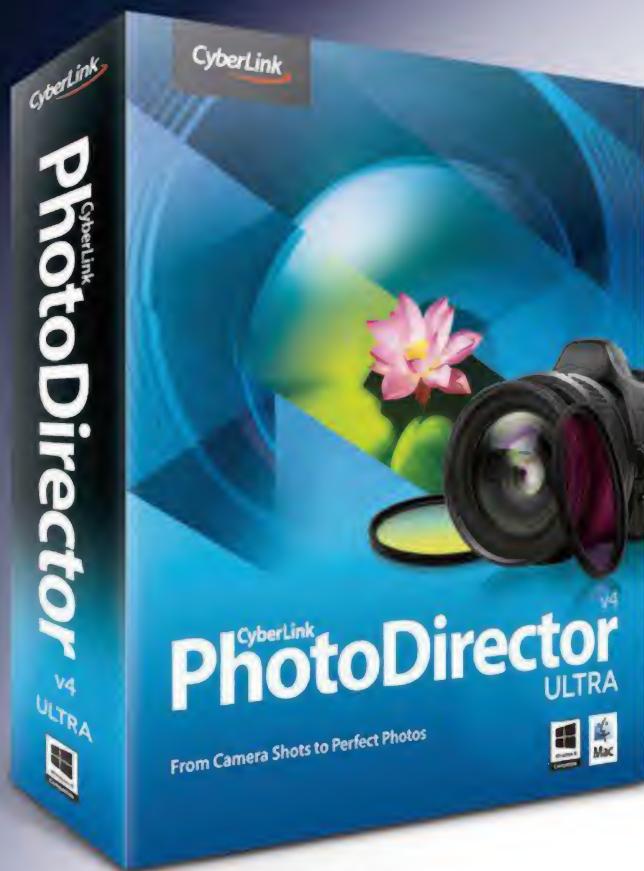
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CyberLink PhotoDirector 4

Sleek, straightforward and affordable, Cyberlink's PhotoDirector 4 Ultra could offer Adobe Photoshop Lightroom some healthy competition. **Richard Sibley** tests the firm's new image-management and editing software

ADOBES dominance of the consumer and professional image-editing markets is such that other manufacturers find it hard to get a foot in the door. However, as our recent comparison test of raw-conversion software showed (AP 1 September), there are plenty of good programs available.

PC users may already be familiar with Cyberlink. Its Power DVD, and other software, often comes bundled with PCs, but now the company is planning to take on the Adobe juggernaut with its latest Cyberlink PhotoDirector 4 raw-editing and image-management software.

WORKFLOW AND ORGANISATION

Like Adobe Photoshop Lightroom, PhotoDirector 4 has a clear workflow divided into categories at the top of the

screen. Although most photographers will be using the software to work with raw image files, PhotoDirector is compatible with most file types, including JPEG and TIFF, allowing photographers to catalogue and edit their images. Once edited, images can be exported, printed, shown as a slideshow or uploaded to Flickr.

PhotoDirector 4 looks very familiar. It has a very straightforward layout reminiscent of Adobe products, with all the key menus located on the left-hand side. The Library section allows photographers to organise and find their images, with the usual options of star and colour ratings, tags and even automated face detection. For social photographers, or for organising your summer holiday pictures, the automatic face detection and recognition makes it extremely easy to tag and then find and

Top: The image Import window is clear and makes it easy to define where imported images are saved

Above: Printing contact sheets, or multiple images, is easy using the Print Layout tools

organise images of specific people.

Images can also be tagged with custom keywords, though this system isn't as comprehensive as that of Lightroom, in which a hierarchical system allows main categories and subcategories to be created, which helps when adding multiple specific tags.

IMAGE ADJUSTMENTS

All the usual image adjustments are readily available, though there isn't quite the level of control found in some of the more professional raw-conversion programs. For example, the noise reduction adjustment has both a colour and luminance slider to reduce the strength of each, and then there are two sub-sliders for each to control the detail. Nevertheless, the noise reduction works well, and it is possible to remove nearly all colour noise and reduce luminance noise without losing too much detail.

There is also no automatic correction for specific lens and camera combinations, but there is keystone correction as well as a fisheye slider, which is really a barrel/pincushion slider. This can reduce lens distortion, but while simple to use, the level of control once again lacks a little of the finesse of more established programs.

As well as a huge range of preset image styles, it is possible to create and save your own, which can be easily and quickly applied at the click of a button. Better still, Cyberlink's online DirectorZone allows users to upload their own styles and share them with others, and currently there are already thousands of styles available.

Where Cyberlink PhotoDirector 4 does

KEY FEATURES

- Image management and keywording
- Raw and JPEG image editing
- Manual lens corrections
- Localised adjustments
- Cut-out and removal tools
- Print layouts
- £79.99



excel in its ability to perform nearly all the corrections you would wish to make within the software, so most photographers will have little need for a separate image-editing program.

LOCALISED ADJUSTMENTS

Where Cyberlink PhotoDirector 4 really comes into its own is in its range of localised adjustments. The software also includes many of the more advanced editing features, such as the ability to paint effects onto parts of an image, that the likes of Photoshop Elements and Apple Aperture have had for a while.

Found under the Edit tab at the top of the screen is a range of very useful tools, such as the self-explanatory People Beautifier tools for portraiture. Putting the rather corny names of these tools to one side, they are actually very useful for quick portrait editing. The Tooth Brush helps to whiten teeth, while the Eye Blinger brightens eyes. The Skin Smoother and Wrinkle Removal tools can improve a person's complexion, while those

carrying a few pounds more than they'd like can benefit from the Body Shaper tools. Thankfully, the strength and severity of each tool can be easily adjusted so users will only have themselves to blame if the effects look too over the top.

There are also a variety of tools for removing objects from images. The Smart Patch tool works just like the Patch Healing tool in Photoshop. It allows an area to be selected and replaced with another and makes removing unwanted distractions, such as litter in a landscape image, a simple affair.

More advanced is the Content Aware Removal tool. This allows the user to simply paint over the object that is to be removed. The software automatically detects the edges of the object, then erases it and fills in the gap left behind. Although the results aren't perfect, it is a useful option for removing small items from a scene, and also provides a good starting point for larger objects. However, further retouching should be done for

Minimum system requirements

Windows

Windows XP 32-bit SP3 or higher, Intel or AMD 3.0GHz processor, 2GB RAM, 1GB disk space, 128MB VRAM graphics card, 1024 x 768-pixel, 16-bit colour display

Macintosh

Mac OS X v10.6.8 or higher, multicore Intel processor with 64-bit support, 2GB RAM, 1024 x 768-pixel display



Above: Cutting out objects can be done quickly with a reasonable degree of accuracy

Left: There are a variety of different preset image styles, with thousands more available to download

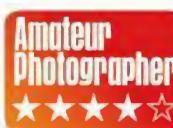
best results. What I was impressed with is the speed at which it is able to select and then calculate the new content. In this regard, PhotoDirector 4 is among the fastest pieces of software I have come across, certainly on a par with Adobe Photoshop or Elements.

The Background Removal tool works in much the same way, except without the final step of adding the new content. Again, the results are not perfect, but they are very close and provide a good starting point for more precise editing.

Finally, there is the option to add a custom watermark or a frame to an image. The watermarks can be previewed on the current image, but can also be saved so that they can be added to future photographs. There is a selection of preset watermarks and frames to help you create your own, or you can start from scratch.

Verdict

ALTHOUGH it may be missing a few of the more advanced features found in other raw-editing programs, the strength of Cyberlink PhotoDirector 4 lies in its simplicity and ease of use, while still offering all the requisite image-editing features. Everything the vast majority of users will need is here, along with basic image library and management tools, slideshow creation and printing page templates. However, it is the fast and intuitive image-editing tools that really make this a great piece of software for beginners. More advanced users, and those more familiar with Lightroom, may find it a little lacking, but on the whole it is certainly worth downloading the free trial version.



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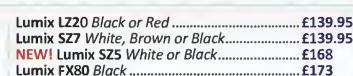
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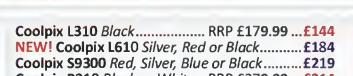
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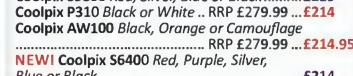
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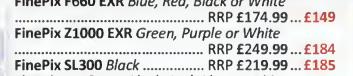
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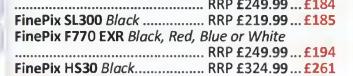
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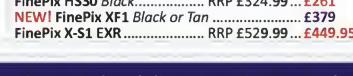
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T0791/2/3, each	£11.99 10ml	Check Website.	
T0794/5/6, each	£11.99 10ml	Check Website.	
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T0801/2/3, each	£8.99 7.4ml	£3.99 13ml, 3 for £10.99	
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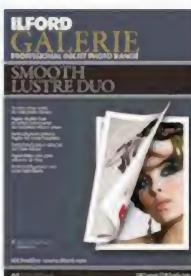
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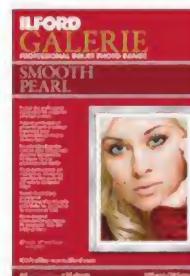
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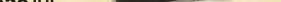
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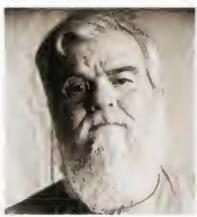
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ROGER HICKS

As artists, we should recognise that our ideas don't always work, and realise when to stop and explore new ones

THE Rencontres, or 'Meetings', in Arles in the first full week in July (Monday-Sunday) are the biggest gathering of fine-art photographers in the world. You can see more exhibitions in a week in Arles than you will see in a year even in London or New York. There are normally well over 100, under the twin umbrellas of the Rencontres themselves and of Voies Off ('fringe festival'), and then there are lots more under neither banner. To quote someone we met there, 'Turn over a stone, and there's an exhibition under it.'

If you are seriously interested in photography, you owe it to yourself to go at least once, though it's addictive and you may find yourself wanting to go again and again. I don't think that my wife Frances Schultz and I have missed a single year in the last decade or more. If you live in the UK, it's a long way away – the best part of 1,000 miles from Calais, depending on the route you take – but once you're there, it is not (or need not be) expensive. We pay just €40 (call it £32, or \$50) per night in the Hotel Voltaire, for a room with a shower, hand basin and loo en suite; you can walk just about everywhere; and €20-30 will buy you a decent-to-good meal for two, with wine. Of course, you can spend over €200 per night for a double room, and the same again for a meal for two, but you don't have to. You can even camp and live on picnics, if you want. Or a room without private facilities at the Voltaire is €30.

And yet, although the Rencontres are one of the high points of our year, there's always a massive dose of frustration mixed in with the pleasure. In any given year, you'll be lucky if you actually like half of the exhibitions, or if you think that one-quarter are really good. In 2012, by common consent a bad year, those figures might well have been halved, or worse: 20% any good, 10% really good. Paradoxically, the worst and most pretentious exhibitions tend to stick in the mind almost as much as the best and most brilliant.

Thus, Frank Hallam Day's work (winner of the 2012 Leica Oskar Barnack Award) was utterly brilliant, as were the Josef Koudelka exhibition,

Gypsies, and Sophie Calle's portraits (and histories) of blind people. But equally, there were plenty of exhibitions that were self-important, lazy, sloppy or incoherent. Sometimes there was a good idea behind them, incompetently executed. Sometimes the idea may have been good, but it was so poorly executed that it was impossible to tell. And sometimes the exhibitions bordered on mental illness. You could see that the photographer had been fascinated by something, to the extent that

they had then completely lost touch with reality.

This is why, in your own photography, you need to know when to stop, whether because the idea isn't working, or because you're not good enough to bring it to fruition (yet). It is in the very nature of creating art that we can always see how it might have been (or might yet be) better. If we are halfway sane – and let's face it, few

artists are much more than halfway sane – then we understand that we need to stop working on it sooner or later. We also need to realise that others may not share our obsessions. Yes, we can produce work that focuses on the banal, or on minute details of surface texture, in the hope that people will project their own reality onto our pictures. Our pictures must, however, have something that makes them worth looking at in their own right. Otherwise, our prospective audience might equally well project their own reality onto wallpaper, or a pebble, or a newspaper (shades of mental illness again). The importance of Rorschach's celebrated ink blots, widely used in psychological testing, is that they remind us of things. But if a picture reminds us of nothing but its banal self, there is no incentive to project anything onto it.

In other words, an artist needs to know when to stop work on a given series, and to go and do something else. This is why I have always hated the saying, 'Winners never quit, and quitters never win.' If you really believe this drivel, you'll just go on doing something pointless when you really ought to stop. In other words, you've already lost. You're just too stupid to realise it. **AP**

Roger Hicks is a much published author on photography. He has written more than three dozen books on the subject, many in partnership with his wife Frances Schultz. He has been a freelance photographer/writer since 1981, contributing to many magazines. Visit his website at www.rogerandfrances.com

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Amateur Photographer, IPC Media, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU
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Cover image: **Phil Hall**

IPC|INSPIRE

Free with the 27 October 2012 issue of Amateur Photographer. Not to be sold separately.



SPI in association with Nikon

When the School of Photographic Imaging was launched back in 2000, little did anyone at AP know that it would be such a success. At that time there was just one course, the Foundation in Photography, that was aimed at film and digital camera users of beginner and intermediate level. Fast forward 12 years and thousands of students have transformed their photography through one of AP's four courses. As well as the original Foundation in Photography, students can now improve their skills through the Foundation in Digital Photography, which is aimed at those new

to photography or digital cameras, the Diploma in Digital Photography, for those who want to get the best from their digital camera, or the Foundation in Digital Imaging Techniques, for those who want to learn how to improve their images on the computer.

So whatever your level of expertise, AP has the course for you to help take your photography to the next level. Knowledge is power, so the saying goes, and in this supplement we aim to show you how you can empower yourself to produce images that you can be proud of. **Lesley Upton, supplement editor**

4. Road to success

With two young children and a career as an employment lawyer, Laura Farnsworth thought a photography course was out of the question – until she discovered the SPI Foundation in Digital Photography. She tells her story

7. My best shot

Rachel Alita Bass explains why her shot of Buckley is her favourite image from the Foundation in Digital Imaging Techniques

8. 50 top tips

Find out what you'll learn if you enrol on one of the SPI courses as we list tips 1-17 that cover topics from sharpening to staging an exhibition

11. Going for gold

Completing the SPI course was just the start of what has been a highly successful photographic journey for Gill Golding, as she explains

15. My best shot

Having completed the Diploma in Digital Photography, Andy Barr chooses his best shot from the course

16. 50 top tips

Tips 18-34 cover subjects such as flare, composition and panning to retouching, still life and photographing buildings

19. My best shot

Val Kressman chooses the best shot from her Foundation in Digital

Imaging Techniques course. Her tutor described it as 'excellent'

20. 50 top tips

We've tips on how to photograph people, use white balance, take landscape images and check exposure in tips 35-50

22. My best shot

Rhys Parry picks a great shot of his son as his favourite image from the Foundation in Photography course



At the heart of the image

'I submitted this shot for module 6, which covered white-balance settings,' says Laura. 'I used the daylight white-balance setting to reproduce accurate colours. It was quite a windy day so I needed a fast shutter speed to catch the sunflower as it swayed, without blurring' Canon EOS 600D, 1/800sec at f/5.6, ISO 100



Road to success

As a lawyer with two young children, **Laura Farnsworth** thought the chance to study a photography course was out of the question – until she discovered the **SPI**. She tells her story

LAURA Farnsworth loves photography – other people's photographs, that is! 'I gaze at images of beautiful landscapes and marvel at the ability some photographers seem to have of capturing someone's personality in a simple portrait, but I've never been able to capture a moment or the feel of a place quite like some others can,' she says. 'I've done a bit of travelling and been to some interesting places, but I've come back with some pretty uninspiring pictures. And I've always found that very annoying. However, things began to change when I started SPI's Foundation in Digital Photography course.'

Until Laura started the SPI course, she had used only a digital point-and-shoot camera, and never used anything other than the automatic settings. 'If I ever took a good photograph, it was usually down to

luck rather than my own creativity,' she says. 'By the time I had my second baby, I was fed up of taking badly composed pictures of my children and decided it was time to learn to take better ones. I was on maternity leave at the time, looking after a young baby and

Below: 'I used a wide aperture for this as the light was fading,' says Laura. 'I really liked the pinks of the sunset. If I took this again, I would have placed the surfer a little more off-centre' Sony Cyber-shot DSC-HX1, 1/80sec at f/3.2, ISO 125



toddler, so I assumed that a photography course was out of the question because it would be too difficult to attend a regular class. Instead, I bought a few photography books and magazines and hoped I'd pick up some tips in that way. It was while looking through *Amateur Photographer* that I saw the SPI course advertised. It looked perfect, because I could do it in my own time at home, without needing to attend a class, and the Foundation in Digital Photography covered everything I needed. I liked the idea of being able to upload images and modules to my tutor at my convenience, and the course seemed like good value for money, too.'

Laura then treated herself to a new digital SLR, read the manual from cover to cover and started the course 18 months ago. 'I'm really enjoying it,' she says. 'Every module has been a challenge and I've learned so many new skills. I've struggled to find time to practise them, but I genuinely don't think a day has gone by since starting the course when I haven't looked at a scene and considered how I would try to capture



Left: 'I used a wide aperture to blur out the tealight holders in the background,' says Laura. 'I positioned myself in such a way so that I caught the reflection of the swimming pool' Canon EOS 600D, 1/320sec at f/4, ISO 100

Below: Laura took this image for module 1 – the theme was 'action'. I used the continuous shooting mode and a fast shutter speed to capture the seeds,' she says Sony Cyber-shot DSC-HX1, 1/640sec at f/4, ISO 125

an image of it with my camera. I'm now much more confident and have a far better understanding of my camera's settings and how to use them in order to achieve the results I want.'

The mix of technical and creative exercises is one of the aspects of the course that Laura loves. 'My favourite module was about the use of aperture and shutter speed,' she explains. 'My sons had a great time one camping holiday when I asked my husband to push them around at speed in a wheelbarrow so that I could practise my panning technique, and using a wide aperture to blur the background has added a nice creative touch to portraits and close-ups.'

'The module on exposure has probably had the most impact on my photographs. Before starting the course I had no idea what white balance was. Now I can't imagine taking a photograph without first checking that I'm using the right white balance setting – the difference it makes to an image is amazing. I also like the fact that the course covers digital editing; there are exercises on improving sharpness, colour and tone, and I've now managed to rescue some of the badly exposed pictures I took before I started the course.'

Now working on her last module, Laura has six months to finish it. 'That sounds like a long time, but it will go very quickly and as a busy working mum I have really appreciated having three years to complete the course,' she says. 'My family and friends have noticed an improvement in my photographs and I've printed some as birthday and thank-you cards. I still have a huge amount to learn, but I'm hoping that with more practice and probably another course I might have a better eye for composition. That's the bit I

Find out more by visiting www.spi-photography-courses.com or call us on 0203 148 4326

now find the hardest – some people seem to have it naturally, but I'm having to learn it.'

'The course has taught me to look at things from different angles and perspectives. Some of the simplest tips have made the biggest impact on my images. For example, lying on the ground, or at eye level when taking pictures of pets or children, rather than standing up, brings so much more life to an image and using leading lines and the rule of thirds add interest and depth.'

I've also started to take pictures of the little things that capture the feel of a place or a holiday, such as the warm setting sun reflecting off a wine glass, long shadows on a balmy evening, a child's sandy bottom, a dog's paw prints in the sand.'

'I've enjoyed this course so much that once I've finished it, I plan to start another one. I'm interested in the Foundation in Photography next – I like the look of the focus on creativity and composition.'



Transform your photography

IN A DAY!

Join AP and WDC experts **Damien Demolder, Nigel Atherton** and Photoshop guru **Philip Andrews** for a full day of photographic instruction and fast-track photographic inspiration at the fantastic Blue Fin Building on the South Bank, London SE1. Learn insider secrets from our award-winning editorial teams and photo experts to motivate and inspire you to take better pictures. Gain invaluable knowledge from other delegates' achievements and challenges during our popular photo-critiquing sessions throughout the day, with demonstrations to show key techniques. Plus, Philip Andrews shows you how to use Photoshop and Lightroom to enhance your images

Highlights include: Exposure, Street photography skills, Learning to use Levels properly, Editing raw, Metering, Photoshop skills, Composition, Lightroom skills, Framing, Marketing your images, DSLR video techniques, Critique session advice

To be held on Friday 16 November 2012 in the Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU

Itinerary

09.30	Welcome registration	Tea/coffee
10.00	Brain vs camera	Be better than your metering system
11.00	Brain vs camera Q&A	Presented by Damien Demolder
11.15	Creative composition	Presented by Nigel Atherton
11.30	Tips for shooting DSLR video	Presented by Nigel Atherton
11.45	Tea & coffee break	
12.00	Lighting - Natural light	Presented by Damien Demolder
12.35	Lighting - Studio light	Presented by Andrew Sydenham
13.00	Lighting demo Q&A	
13.15	Lunch	
14.15	Every image needs Photoshop	How you can use Lightroom and Photoshop to carry out essential edits
15.15	Every image needs Photoshop Q&A	Presented by Philip Andrews
15.30	Make cash from your photos	Presented by Matt Golowczynski and Michael Topham
16.00	Final Q&As to the panel and audience photo critique session	
16.30	Chat with the experts over a glass of wine	
17.30	Ends	

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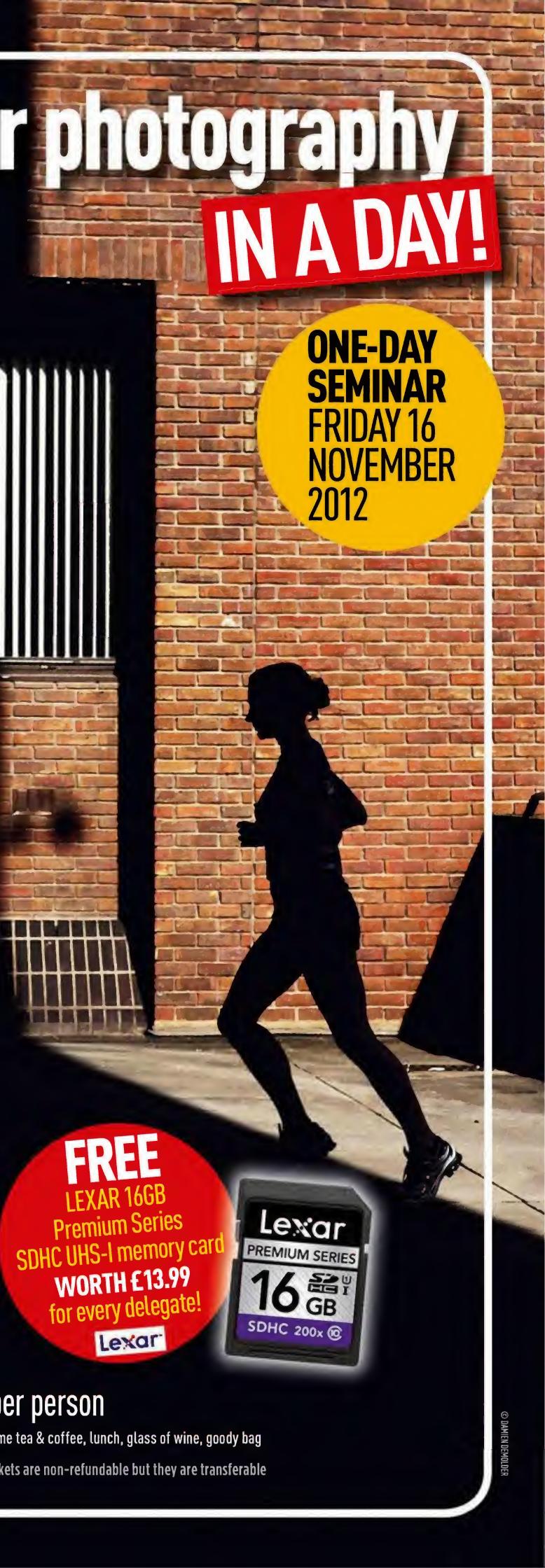
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Canon EOS 450D, 18-55mm, 1/60sec at f/5.6, ISO 400

My best shot

Rachel Alita Bass

Two years on since completing the SPI **Foundation in Digital Imaging Techniques**, we ask Rachel to choose her favourite image from the course

RACHEL, 32, confesses on her website that she is 'slightly obsessed with animals', and recently left a career in international business to become a dog trainer. She has enjoyed taking photographs for around 12 years, and while on a trip to Japan in 2004 bought a Sony compact camera. A year later, while

backpacking – and deciding to live on the other side of the world for a couple of years – her interest in photography grew and she found herself wanting to experiment.

'I couldn't leave my camera behind no matter where I was going,' she says. 'I bought my first DSLR in 2008, and while I am still

getting to know it, I haven't looked back since.'

'This past year has been focused on building my portfolio and website (see www.rachelalita.com). I've learned how retouching and editing images can play such a huge part in the enjoyment you can get from taking a great photograph. It has also taught me how valuable a tool it can be when wanting to take photography that step further.'

'I am lucky enough to have worked on a couple of freelance photography jobs and also a couple of weddings. I would not have been able to offer suitable images had it

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not been for what I learned through the SPI Foundation in Digital Imaging Techniques course.'

'I chose this image as I found this part of the course (playing around with tones and colours selectively) the most enjoyable – and because it is a photograph of my handsome cat Buckley!'

Call 020 3148 4326 or visit www.spi-photography-courses.com. Quote 'TYP' for an extra 5% discount

50 top tips

Want to know what you'll learn if you enrol on one of the SPI courses? We've provided a taster of 17 top tips on these pages, with 17 more tips on **pages 16-17** and 16 tips on **pages 20-21**. Find out how you can enrol on page 18

1 SHARPENING

Remember that sharpening is a destructive process which, while appearing to improve an image, actually removes detail from the original file. The right amount of sharpening is what you can get away with – too much and the image is destroyed. Too little is nearly always better than too much.

Diploma in Digital Photography

mind full of outstanding bills, your job and your kids? Well, stop for a minute and start looking. Start to consciously explore what you see and make an internal commentary on what you are looking at. Every scene contains a multitude of textures, colours, tones and movement, so what is it that you notice most? **Foundation in Digital Photography**

2 COLOUR

If you have time and are shooting at leisure, it can be a good idea to purposely leave something suitable for white-balance sampling in a picture. Try shooting one picture with a grey card in it, then remove the card and shoot another picture. On the computer, take a sample from the grey card in the first shot and apply the same custom settings to the second image. If the card is small and in a suitable place, it can be cloned out afterwards. **Diploma in Digital Photography**

5 LENS POWER

Shooting from up close with a wideangle lens exaggerates perspective, while shooting from far away with a long lens compresses perspective. **Foundation in Digital Photography**

3 COLOUR & SHAPE

The colours in your pictures can be exaggerated, de-emphasised or changed altogether by using filters over the lens. A polariser can increase the saturation of existing colours, and effects filters can be used to add colour where there was none. For example, a grey, lifeless sky can be livened up using a grad filter, which is coloured at the top and clear at the bottom. Depending on the colour of the filter you use, you can make the sky any colour you like. But making it look realistic is another matter entirely, as you don't get many purple skies over Britain. A blue grad will make a blue sky bluer, but it will also make the clouds blue. Grad filters are best for enhancing or dramatising existing colours, say, at dawn and dusk.

Foundation in Photography

6 SHARPENING

To ensure that your image is sharpened correctly, you'll need to first think about how your image will be reproduced, how many pixels a detail consists of, and then how different it has to be from its direct neighbour before it is regarded as a detail or line. It is important to realise that sharpening can spoil, as well as improve, an image.

Foundation in Digital Imaging Techniques

7 PIXELS

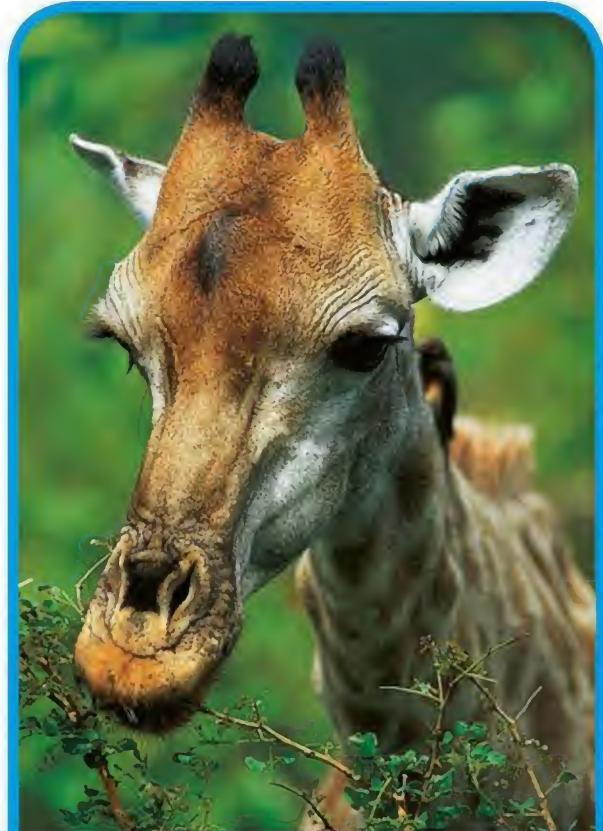
No doubt when you bought your digital camera or scanner, one of the important considerations was the number of pixels (megapixels) or resolution (pixels per inch) provided. However, did you realise that by cropping your image after you have captured it you could end up throwing away millions of those expensively acquired pixels? Use only half the image you shot in a print and you will have thrown away half of your investment. **Foundation in Digital Imaging Techniques**

4 LEARNING TO LOOK

Learning to look is an important skill – as important a technique as any other in the photographer's arsenal. How do we learn to look? Well, for a start, give yourself the opportunity. Do you walk around with your

8 IMPACT

The rule of thirds is one of the easiest compositional rules to understand and put into practice. This involves mentally dividing your frame up into thirds, vertically and horizontally, taking care to place significant points along such imaginary lines (see right). **Foundation in Digital Photography**



9 NATURE & WILDLIFE

By far the easiest way to practise your wildlife photography is to choose a location where you are guaranteed to find some animals – and where you can be sure they won't run away. This means a visit to a zoo, safari park or animal sanctuary. **Foundation in Photography**



10 SHARPENING

Most digital cameras have red, green and blue-sensitive pixels arranged in a grid on the sensor. Before the light from the camera's lens reaches the sensor, though, it is slightly unsharpened to ensure that each point of colour in the subject reaches a pixel, or combination of pixels, that are sensitive to that colour. However, this results in the image being less than 100% sharp. To correct this, we can sharpen the image in-camera or later when editing. **Foundation in Digital Imaging Techniques**



11 NATURE & WILDLIFE

Ordinary multi-purpose zoom lenses such as the popular 28-80mm and 80-200mm are fine for occasional nature pictures, but if you decide to take wildlife photography seriously you'll eventually find them limiting. Specialised lenses are the way to go. Unfortunately, these are expensive – in fact, you will probably need to spend more on lenses than on cameras. If cost is a factor, it's worth considering the second-hand market for at least part of the kit.

Foundation in Photography

12 DIGITAL BASICS

Raw files are very flexible and can stand a lot more processing than either JPEG or TIFF files. Due to their size, raw files will slow down your camera's frames-per-second speed and will not allow you to shoot as

many images in a high-speed sequence. You will not fit as many raw images on your memory card as you will JPEGs, but you will get more raw files on the card than you will TIFFs. **Diploma in Digital Photography**

14 EDITING

Adobe Photoshop Elements provides an excellent explanation of choices for colour settings. In essence, we can select a colour space that optimises colour either for our computer screen (sRGB) or one that optimises colours for print (Adobe RGB 199). You have to decide which your priority is. If you select Adobe RGB, your computer will attempt to show you what the colour might look like the final print. But, in fact, those colours will be slightly less vivid on screen than they appear in the final print. Set the colour space to sRGB and your computer will show you the colours fairly

accurately, but restrict the intensity of tone and colour to less than your printer can reproduce. **Foundation in Digital Imaging Techniques**

15 WHITE BALANCE

If you leave the tungsten setting on and shoot outside in daylight, you will find that your pictures take on a heavy blue tint. **Diploma in Digital Photography**

16 EXHIBITION

When creating a portfolio or presentation of images, each picture should be selected not only on its individual merits but also with consideration to how it works with other pictures. You should consider colour relationships, and how one will sit alongside the other. For example, a photograph that has its focal point on the right works better placed opposite an image with its focal point to the left. **Foundation in Digital Photography**

17 SELECTIONS

Selections are so central to image editing that the tools to do it are usually placed right at the very top of any toolbox. Simply put, making a selection allows you to alter one area of your image without changing a neighbouring part. It also allows you to create as well as correct, for example, to combine images in a photomontage. **Foundation in Digital Imaging Techniques**

Toned

Stained

Toned & stained



13 BLACK & WHITE

Toning and staining with a single colour, or with multiple colours, can enhance black & white images by creating added atmosphere. The

difference between toning and staining is that toning alters the colour of the grey tones, while staining affects only the base paper colour. A toned image shows a sepia subject on white paper, while a stained one has a grey subject

on sepia-coloured paper. The difference is that a toned image has a white base and coloured greys, while a stained one has neutral greys and a coloured base.

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Going for gold

Completing the SPI course was just the start of what has been a highly successful photographic journey for **Gill Golding**, as she explains

IN 2010, Gill Golding decided it was time to leave teaching and try something new. Having previously only ever taken occasional holiday snaps, she set about trying her hand at photography. 'I spent the first year snapping every day for a 365 project and joined a local creative photography course where I learned some basics about camera settings and a lot about creativity,' she says.

Gill soon realised that she really needed to work on her basic photography skills if she was ever going to produce anything she would be happy with. 'I wanted to understand as much as I could about camera settings, and how to approach different types of subjects, so I joined the SPI Foundation in Photography,' she says.

'Whizzing Along'.
Having covered shutter speeds and panning in the course, Gill took time out to practise her new-found skills
Canon EOS 7D, 15-85mm, 1/15sec at f/25, ISO 100

 'I chose the SPI because, after researching, I decided that if a course is linked to a magazine of such status, I would not be making a huge mistake and wasting money. I made the correct choice. I liked the fact that I could submit modules online, and the offer of discounted software was a plus point.'

'I enjoyed the course immensely. Initially, I was anxious about sending in the first module. However, I was pleasantly reassured when I received the feedback. From then on, and in liaison with my tutor, I decided to submit a module per month, which meant I would spend a month on each skill. By choosing this approach, I became very confident with the skills I was learning, and not only did I manage to complete and submit the images required for each module, but I also tried out some creative approaches and compositions for fun.'

Gill says that once she had mastered the camera skills within the first few modules, with metering being hardest, she thoroughly enjoyed working through the elective modules. 'I chose Buildings and Structures,



Above: Gill is interested in urban regeneration and took this shot of King's Cross in London

Canon EOS 7D, 15-85mm, 1/160sec at f/16, ISO 200

Left: 'Dreams and Reality' was taken as part of Gill's Macro and Close Up module

Canon EOS 7D, 100mm macro, 1/100sec at f/8, ISO 200

Right: Gill took this shot as part of her 'Another Side of Brighton' project

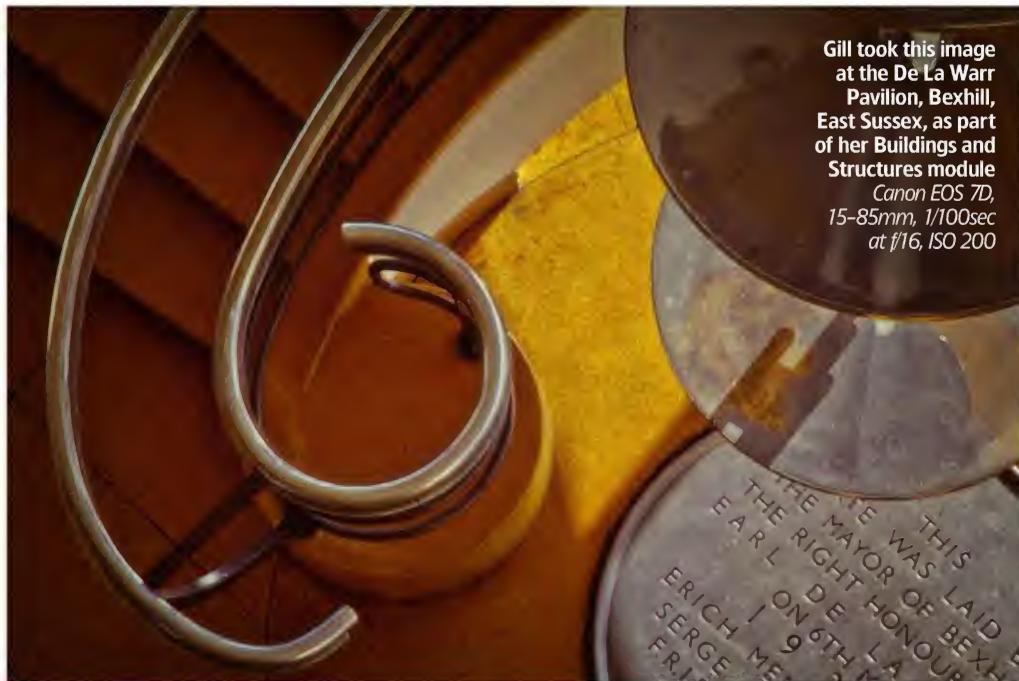
Canon EOS 7D, 100mm macro, 1/200sec at f/2.8, ISO 200

Far right: 'For this photo, I wanted to make sure the textures and shapes were as sharp as possible, so I concentrated on using a small aperture,' says Gill

Canon EOS 7D, 15-85mm macro, 1/80sec at f/16, ISO 400

Macro and Close Up, and Landscape,' she explains. 'I chose things that I knew would be challenging, and I wasn't sure whether I would cope with buildings and structures. However, I discovered a love of architectural photography and learned that I love using shapes, patterns and designs. For example, in the image taken at the De La Warr Pavilion (top right), I used a longer focal length to compress the scene and concentrated on the curves.'





Gill took this image at the De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill, East Sussex, as part of her Buildings and Structures module
Canon EOS 7D, 15-85mm, 1/100sec at f/16, ISO 200

I also learned that I love macro photography. I thought I would love landscapes, but found that I prefer urban landscapes. I took the 'Dreams and Reality' image (far left) at Brighton Marina. The scene represented something about dreams, but with the inclusion of the nail, reality also.'

As many people who sign up with the School of Photographic Imaging have full-time jobs, students have three years to complete their chosen course, although

Gill completed hers, including her personal project, within ten months. 'The course tutor was superb and the detailed feedback was where the real value of the course lay,' she adds. 'There was plenty to read that included suggestions for further development, and each month, along with the module I was working on, I would try every suggestion made. This was the equivalent of having a proper tutorial and is what really made the course. I still read some of the feedback

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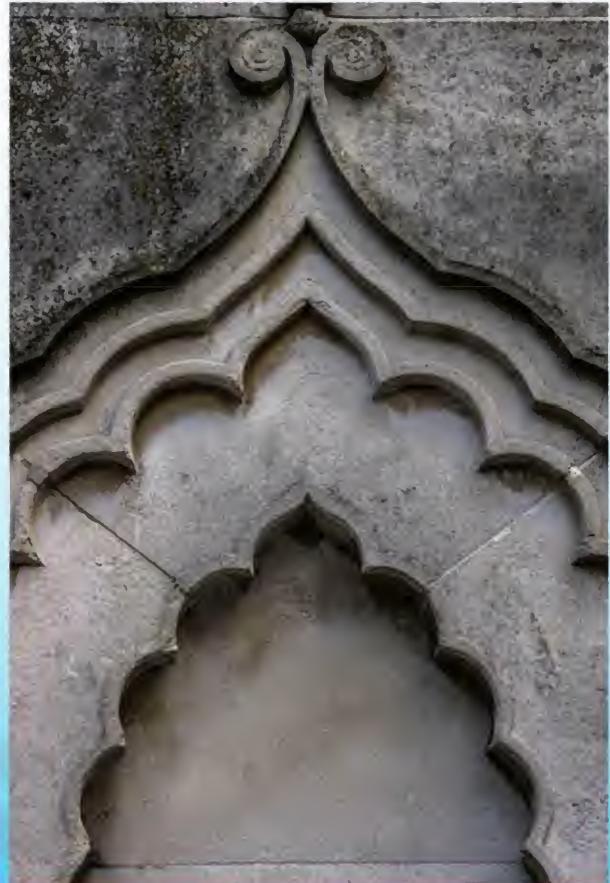
when I want to return to a subject.'

After completing the course at the end of May this year, Gill knew that she wanted to concentrate on more project work/narrative. 'Towards this end, I set up a small meet-up group in Brighton called Photo Projects (www.meetup.com/photoprojectsbrighton), where photographers support each other in the development of project work,' says Gill.

Having recently completed the International Urban Photography Summer School at Goldsmiths University in London, Gill has begun a project on urban regeneration. She enjoyed the work so much that she is now preparing her portfolio and is in the process of applying to Goldsmiths to do an MA in Photography and Urban Cultures. 'I hope I am accepted,' she adds.

Over the years, Gill has been influenced by the work of various photographers. 'I find Edward Burtynsky's oil work incredible and disturbing, while Markéta Luskacová's street work is full of emotion and inspires me,' she says. 'I'm fascinated by Jeff Wall's staged photos and I like Maja Daniels' work, as she covers some very interesting subjects within her projects and I like her link with sociology. Finally, I would love to own Robert Frank's book *The Americans*.

Gill sees her future as being very much about urban photography and the development of projects/narrative linked to research. 'Alongside that I like to take photos of things I see and these are the photographs where I can be as creative as I like,' she adds. 'I still have much to learn and am looking forward to continuing the journey.'



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Nikon D3S, 24-70mm, 1/40sec at f/3.2, ISO 250

My best shot

Andy Barr

Having completed the **Diploma in Digital Photography**, we ask Andy to choose the best shot he submitted during the SPI course

ANDY is a 65-year-old heritage operations manager for London Underground. He became seriously interested in photography about eight years ago. 'Buying a new DSLR gave me the impetus to learn, and both the Foundation in Digital Photography and Diploma in Digital Photography courses were

the perfect media for this,' he says. 'I think they are splendid value.'

Andy's photograph was taken from the rooftop of the London Underground Headquarters on New Year's Eve. 'I had been taking pictures of fireworks for a number of years, with mixed results,' he says. 'However, as a result of

undertaking the course, I was able to plan the image, compose the framing and make the picture more effective. The strength of the course is that it allows individual parts of photography to be considered by separating each of the elements.'

'I made hardly any changes to this photograph in Photoshop,' Andy adds. 'The only small change was to crop the final image slightly. Similar images had suffered from burn-out on the face of the clock tower due to the comparative brightness of its lit face compared to its surroundings.'

'I took a couple of earlier shots, but they did not produce the strength I wanted in the image.'

However, by carefully analysing where I had gone wrong I was able to see what changes needed to be made to the framing, exposure and particularly the ISO. My previous knowledge of photography was inadequate to give me that knowledge, but thanks to the courses I had a strong foundation in the elements of composition and technical competency.'

'My tutor was a hard taskmaster, but perfectly correct in his judgements. For this image he commented: "The buildings on the skyline are nicely silhouetted, the London Eye and the fireworks work together, and the image of Big Ben is the final touch to this iconic image. You saved the best till last!"'

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50 top tips

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18 BUILDINGS

Artificial lighting on the exterior of many buildings can make the shapes and angles of some modern structures look even more alien. Use a few odd camera angles of your own to emphasise this.

Foundation in Photography

19 DIGITAL BASICS

In-camera processing is fine for small pictures, such as 5x7in, but for anything larger – particularly for your best work – leave the processing for your computer software. **Diploma in Digital Photography**



20 PANNING

Even with a slow shutter speed we can render a moving subject sharp by panning – following its movement as we make the exposure. It's a technique that requires some practice to carry out smoothly and it's best to use a tripod and a telephoto lens. Follow the action through your

viewfinder before you take your shot and then, when the subject is where you want it, gently press the shutter button while continuing to follow the action. You might need to take dozens of pictures to get a successful one so don't give up after a few attempts. Try different shutter speeds to vary effects and with subjects moving at different speeds. **Foundation in Digital Photography**

21 STILL LIFE

The big problem when photographing glass objects is reflections. If the subject is empty or contains only a clear liquid, you should light it from behind. A backlight will define the edges and any designs with a black line, and bring highlights to areas that need to sparkle. For a less sparkly image, illuminate a light background rather than the subject. Light will bounce back towards the camera and pass through the subject, defining its shape with delicate light and shade. For bottles containing dark liquid, try lighting from above, using a pair of white reflectors on either side to form catchlights down the bottle's sides. A carefully placed reflector can also be used to throw light back onto a label if necessary.

Foundation in Photography

22 LENS POWER

One of the things to consider when buying a fixed-focal-length or zoom lens is the aperture range. If you want to take pictures under low-light conditions, or of fast-moving subjects, a fast lens with a large aperture is useful. These lenses are expensive, but allow you to shoot in up to a quarter of the light that a standard model requires.

Foundation in Digital Photography

23 RETOUCHING

Aside from cleaning your DSLR's sensor by hand (not for the faint-hearted), there is little to prevent the odd speck of dust from appearing in your images. Also, if the camera doesn't have a built-in dust-removal system, such as CCD-shift, which vibrates the sensor at high speed to rid it of any undesirables, you will need to use one of the tools in your image-editing software to clean it up. The same will be true if you scan prints or film.

Foundation in Digital Imaging Techniques

24 ACTION & SPORTS

Being close enough is only part of the equation when choosing your shooting spot for action and sports. Watch out for distracting backgrounds. Some crowd distraction can be minimised by using a shallow depth of field, but it is best to have as clear a background as possible. This will help your subject stand out.

Foundation in Photography

25 DIGITAL BASICS

The great thing about JPEGs is that they don't take up much room. If you want to get as many images on your memory card as possible, this is the format to select in the menu when it comes to saving pictures. The JPEG format compresses the information in your images to make the file size shrink so you can shoot more pictures. The images are also easier to move around, from the memory card to the computer or to send as email attachments, for example.

Diploma in Digital Photography

26 FLARE

Flare occurs when sunlight or a highly reflective light enters your lens. We call it non-image-forming light and it can make a real mess of your images. To avoid flare, always try to use a lens hood. It might only be very mild flare that you are experiencing, but it will take the edge off your images and you might not realise what the problem is.

Foundation in Photography

27 EDITING

Photographs for use on the internet are best saved as JPEGs and image-editing programs allow you to adjust the level of compression of images as they are saved. In this way, you can save a version of your original file not only with pixel dimensions suited to a screen, but also with an appropriate level of compression.

Foundation in Digital Photography

28 QUALITY

Your camera's picture quality menu may offer several degrees of sharpening and you should take identical pictures at each setting to see just how they look. Different settings will suit different subjects and conditions.

Foundation in Digital Photography

29 COLOUR

Generally, if a picture feels too warm it needs red and/or yellow removing. In doing so, you add blue and cyan. If the shot looks too cool, you remove cyan and blue, thus

31 COMPOSITION

With strong composition there doesn't have to be a single point of interest as with other pictures. A pattern can be more than enough to keep the viewer occupied.

Foundation in Photography



adding red and yellow. If it is too pink, you need to add green, and if it is too green you add magenta. **Diploma in Digital Photography**

route to correcting colour than trying to fix it in your image-editing software.

Foundation in Digital Imaging Techniques

32 TONES

Colour casts occur when, for a variety of reasons, a single colour casts a veil over all the other colours of an image. Recognising when the light you take your picture in might cause a problem and adjusting your camera's white balance is a more effective

33 COMPOSITION

Use lines to draw the eye to the subject, not out of the picture. Avoid lines and patterns that lead out of the shot or in the opposite direction to the intended subject. Often lines that stretch horizontally can form mental barriers to the viewer's entry into the picture.

Foundation in Photography



30 COLOUR & SHAPE

Often, the best way to draw attention to the shape of an object is to eliminate from the photograph

all its other properties, leaving only the subject's outline to tell the viewer what it is. The most effective way to achieve this is to light the subject from behind. **Foundation in Photography**

34 MODES

A camera needs to ensure that the tones in your picture reflect those in the original scene and it uses various devices to ensure a correct exposure. An incorrectly exposed image will be either too dark (underexposed) or too light (overexposed). In the program (Auto), shutter priority and aperture priority modes the camera will take care to get the best exposure it can by automatically selecting a combination of settings.

Foundation in Digital Photography



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'I started with the SPI Foundation in Photography in 2009 and learned so much from this course. I always look forward to getting feedback from my tutors and I am currently completing the Foundation in Digital Imaging Techniques course.' Ross Mackenzie

DIPLOMA IN DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

- Working with tones: Levels and Curves
- Contrast control
- Using white balance
- Black & white techniques, toning and staining
- Working with colour
- Retouching and sharpening
- Sizing, printing and storing

FOUNDATION IN PHOTOGRAPHY

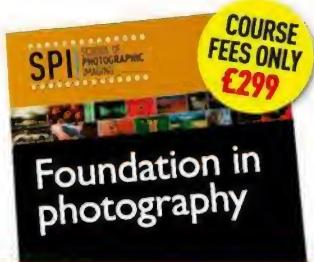
- Winning composition
- Making landscapes with impact
- Expert metering techniques
- Shooting striking portraits
- Mastering still life
- Depth of field control
- Controlling flash
- Wildlife and nature photography
- Using colour
- Sports and action shots
- Choosing the right lens

FOUNDATION IN DIGITAL IMAGING TECHNIQUES

- Size and crop a digital image
- Adjust tones, correct colours and convert your images to monochrome
- Use the selection tools to adjust certain areas of your images
- Remove dust and scratches from precious photos
- Banish redeye forever
- Sharpen your images
- Create an archive to safeguard valuable pictures

FOUNDATION IN DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

- Viewpoint and composition
- How to use your camera's program modes
- All about lenses
- Sharpening your image
- Formatting, sizing and printing
- ISO, flash, exposure and white balance setting
- Basic image editing



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Canon EOS 350D, 17-70mm, 1/125sec at f/7, ISO 200

My best shot

Val Kressman

We ask Val to choose the best shot from her **SPI Foundation in Digital Imaging Techniques** course. Her tutor described it as 'excellent'

VAL IS a retired computing lecturer in further education who started taking photographs with a film camera before the 'digital revolution'. 'However, digital photography has made it possible

for me to broaden my scope, and I enjoy landscapes, street photography, architecture and photographing the railways and industrial archaeology in the area of Wales where I live,' she says.

'I felt the SPI Foundation in Digital Imaging Techniques course would give me the skills I need to edit my photographs – and it has. I enjoyed the course as its flexibility suits my lifestyle. The feedback and suggestions from my tutor were very helpful.'

Val's chosen photograph was taken at the Llanberis Lake Railway in Snowdonia, North Wales. 'I liked the steam and the movement in the picture,' she says. 'My original photograph contained more of the surroundings, but I have cropped it to concentrate on the train and the steam. I felt a

monochrome version would give an effect similar to the era when the slate mines were working, and the SPI course gave me the necessary skills to do this.'

Val's tutor thought her image was excellent, adding, 'This conversion works very well, and the scene really suits the treatment. I think the monochrome version is more interesting than the colour one and it makes the image seem older than it is. The only thing I would consider is cropping the image to remove the person on the right and making the train slightly larger in the frame.'

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50 top tips

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Find out how you can enrol on page 18

35 WHITE BALANCE

As the daylight setting on a camera is balanced for the average type of daylight we get in mid-morning and mid-afternoon on a clear sunny day, shots taken early in the morning and late in the afternoon will be slightly warm, while those shot at midday will be a little cool.

Diploma in Digital Photography

in the scene that you are photographing, and expose either too little or too much. This happens because the exposure meter in the camera is designed to correctly expose an average scene. Any scene that contains a range of tones that are generally too light or too dark will be made average by the camera. This means that a snowy landscape or a black cat could both be rendered grey in a photograph. **Foundation in Digital Photography**

36 BUILDINGS

It is generally accepted that buildings should not be photographed flat on, unless they have some special feature of symmetry that is best shown in this way. A building photographed directly from the front will look flat, rather like a stage set.

Foundation in Photography

37 EXPOSURE METER

There are times when your camera's exposure meter will be fooled by the tones

38 SIZE & USE

Interpolation is the process of enlarging or enhancing by the insertion of extra data derived from assessment of surrounding data values. Interpolation should be carried out before, rather than after, sharpening, otherwise the sharpening artefacts will be made larger, too. If possible, interpolation should be the first thing you do in post-processing, although this does create a larger file with which to work.

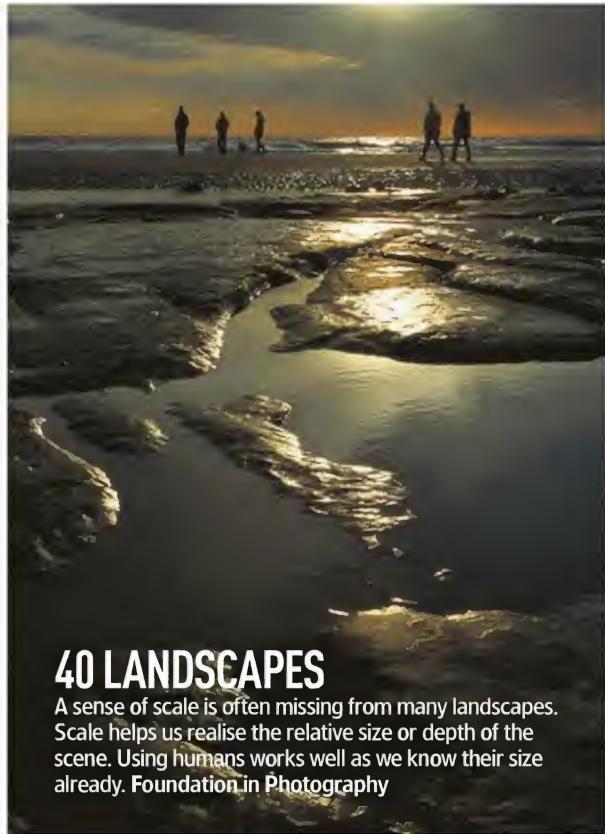
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39 PHOTOGRAPHING PEOPLE

When you shoot people in their own environments, let them get on with what they usually do. Direct a little if

necessary, to see their face or what they are doing, but mostly leave them alone. **Foundation in Photography**



40 LANDSCAPES

A sense of scale is often missing from many landscapes. Scale helps us realise the relative size or depth of the scene. Using humans works well as we know their size already. **Foundation in Photography**

41 TONES

The Levels adjustment allows us to alter the brightness and contrast in an image with far greater control than the basic Brightness and Contrast tool. The main advantage is that we can alter the brightness of an image without affecting the richness of the shadows. **Foundation in Digital Imaging Techniques**

42 LANDSCAPES

The only time a dull sky is an asset is when you are making a feature of its flatness. In a very simple composition you can place a single object, such as a tree, onto the background of an overcast sky. If you are making a point about the weather being terrible, this sort of sky will back you up. **Foundation in Photography**

43 PIXELS

Resampling creates a new image that is either bigger or smaller by sampling the pixels you already have and then adding or subtracting from the number of pixels. At the same time, it tries to keep your image looking as much as possible like your original picture. This resampling is also known as interpolation. We need 300 pixels for every inch to make a good-quality print, but what if, at the size we would like to make our print, we have, say, 200 pixels per inch? Resampling allows us to add those extra pixels. However, if you resample too much, your picture will consist of mainly interpolated pixels and the image quality will suffer. **Foundation in Digital Imaging Techniques**

44 WHITE SUBJECTS

When photographing a white subject (see right) remember to give it at least 1 extra stop of exposure. Try to bracket between 1 and 2 stops to be safe.

Foundation in Photography

45 STILL LIFE

There are two good starting points for food photography: a camera angle that is very slightly higher than the level of the food or a shot from straight down from above.

Foundation in Photography

46 EXPOSURE

The precise colour of the light around us alters depending on the source of that light. If we take daylight as our norm, then we can describe candlelight as having a warmer and more orange tone, fluorescent light as being slightly green, and the light we might experience on a cloudy day as being cooler or having a slightly blue hue. The camera's white-balance settings ensure that colours are faithfully reproduced when illuminated by a range of light sources.

Foundation in Digital Photography



47 RETOUCHING

The Healing tool is an excellent way to remove dust spots and particularly hair marks, scratches on scanned film, or folds and rips in scanned old prints. This tool is especially good for mending line-like faults as it does not copy as the Cloning tool does, but attempts to blend the fault with tones and colours from the sampled area, as well as to some degree with the area surrounding the fault. **Diploma in Digital Photography**

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48 SELECTIONS

Feathering the selection gives it a soft edge, enabling any changes that we make to that selection to more subtly blend into the unchanged areas. In other words, it makes our changes less obvious, so if you find adjustments you make are obvious, you might consider feathering your selections by a greater amount. **Foundation in Digital Imaging Techniques**

49 LENS POWER

It is tempting, because of the ease of editing a digital image, to capture too much of a scene in one picture and then enlarge the bits we really want later. This is not recommended, as not only are we throwing away precious pixels, but we can also achieve pretty much the same thing with a zoom lens while we are taking the pictures. One other issue you should be aware of is that, as you zoom, you magnify movement as well as your subject. This can lead to the creation of a blurred image. So always use the highest shutter speed you can when using longer focal lengths and, if possible, use a tripod or support your camera on a stable surface. **Foundation in Digital Photography**



50 IMPACT

When you are shooting close-up, remember that everything is magnified. This means that as well as your subject, any slight movement is magnified, too. So be careful to shoot in good light and, if you can, support your camera using a tripod, table or wall to avoid image blur. **Foundation in Digital Photography**

My best shot



Canon EOS 550D, 42mm, 1/250sec at f/5.6, ISO 100

Rhys Parry

After buying a digital SLR, Rhys enrolled on the SPI **Foundation in Photography** course. This is his favourite shot

RHYS is a musician/tutor in music technology at a further education college in Bangor, North Wales. He had always taken photographs at birthdays, Christmas and during holidays, but didn't take

photography seriously. 'After breaking my compact camera, I found out about DSLRs that took great photos and HD video,' he says. 'I decided to buy a Canon EOS 550D and enrol myself on the

Foundation in Photography in 2011.

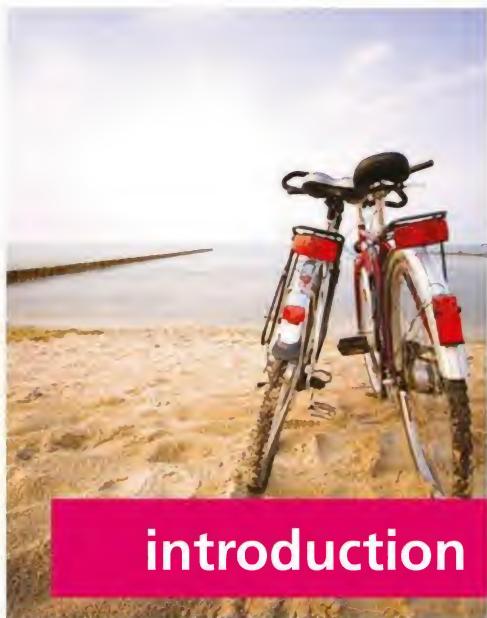
'I have enjoyed working on the modules, and learning about the technical and creative side of photography. The course has given me the knowledge and confidence to go out and take different photographs, and to try new things. The tutor feedback has always been very constructive and a great help.'

Rhys's best shot is a photograph of his son Siôn Rhys, which was used for Module 10 – People and Storytelling. 'I'm happy with the outcome of the shot,' says Rhys. 'Siôn's expression always puts a smile on my face. We must have been clowning around and joking at the time.'

'Technically, I think it has worked well, although not all of the white background is totally blown out. This was due to the lack of space in the room that we were using. Working on this shot gave me more confidence in using flash and it opened some new doors to what could be done. Buying a softbox was a great move, and for this shot I used a Canon 580EX II Speedlite on quarter power in a softbox in front of the subject, plus a Canon 430EX on quarter power pointed at the white background.'

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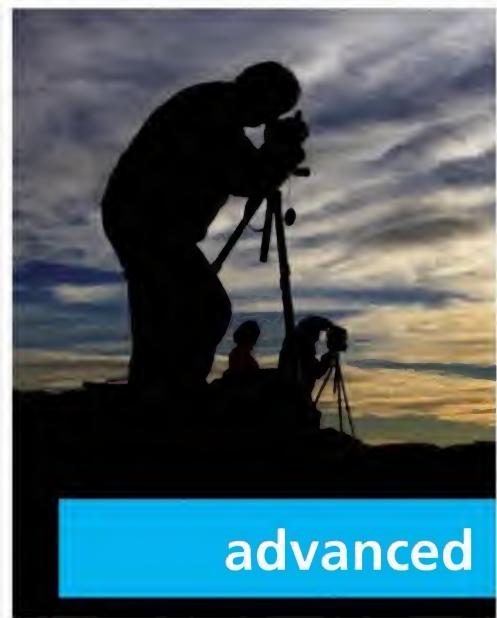
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